

F2





The Scheme of Learning for Religious Education in the Primary School

Introduction

Writing a progressive, easy to use Scheme of Learning for Religious Education is never an easy task, even for RE specialists. How will I find the time to do all this planning? Which religions shall we teach when? What is the weighting to be given to Christianity and other religions? How far can we go with the enquiry-based approach? Have we got the resources necessary to teach the new syllabus? I don't have a budget! What about children's spiritual development? What about SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural) development? What about the British Values agenda? What is 'religious literacy'?

Very aware of the drive to make RE a meaningful and relevant subject, and also the huge amount of time and effort needed to write a Scheme of Learning for the whole school, my colleagues and I have written Discovery RE to help short-cut the planning process whilst still enabling teachers to take ownership of how they deliver each lesson/enquiry.

Discovery RE is a set of detailed medium-term plans for RE from Years F1/2 to Year 6. It adopts an enquiry-based approach to teaching and learning.

Christianity is taught in every year group, with Christmas and Easter given new treatment each year, developing the learning in a progressive way. Baha'i, Buddhism, Hinduism, Humanism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism are also covered. Humanist perspectives are added when appropriate in some enquiries in addition to the Introduction to Humanism enquiry.

The overview grid shows the long-term plan, with choices needing to be made as to which religion/worldview to teach alongside Christianity in some year groups.

Each enquiry demands the equivalent of 6 lessons, but teaching time could be blocked over perhaps 3 half days to enhance learning. Each enquiry has a learning objective which shows the learning over the enquiry and SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) development opportunities are mapped throughout as is each enquiry's contribution to the British Values agenda.

British Values

Religious Education is a key player in engendering knowledge and understanding which can lead to tolerance and respect for others and their beliefs. It does not, however, teach children to passively accept, but rather encourages evaluation and critical thinking, equipping them to consider belief positions they encounter. Discovery RE contributes significantly to the British Values agenda and the mapping documents on the Community Area and at the beginning of each year group show how.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness means cultivating a sense of awareness on purpose, in a non-judgemental way in the present moment. It is hoped that teachers will use mindfulness practices to build children's self-awareness and skills of reflection, thus supporting their RE learning as well as their personal spiritual development. If you are using Jigsaw, the mindful approach to PSHE, you can, of course, use Calm Me time in RE lessons too.

Introducing the Discovery RE Owl Crew

To help children engage with the process of enquiry, we introduced the Discovery RE Owl Crew.



Bertie

**F1/2 (Nursery/
Reception)**



Abbey

Year 1



Sofia

Year 2



Huey

Year 3



Egbert

Year 4



Auberon

Year 5



Gudrun

Year 6

You will notice the number of feathers on their chests denotes the year group. Each whole school set of Discovery RE includes one of each of the OWL CREW. (Extra OWLS are available from the Discovery RE online shop www.discoveryschemeofwork.com) You may well find each class needs its own.

The OWL CREW names mean wisdom/intelligence in a range of languages, thus pointing to the way they are used in Discovery RE.

In the planning you will see the OWL in the text every time we suggest you use him/her.

The idea is that the OWLS are sources of wisdom so that:

a) Children can ask them questions during the enquiry.

The file 'Questions for OWL CREW' on the Community Area (Resources Tab), has printable envelope templates for children to write their questions on.

They write their questions on the envelope template and give them to the owl. (You may like to provide a special post box or receptacle for your class' questions).

This gives you, the teacher, time to think through an appropriate answer and build this into the next lesson, the answer obviously coming from the owl.

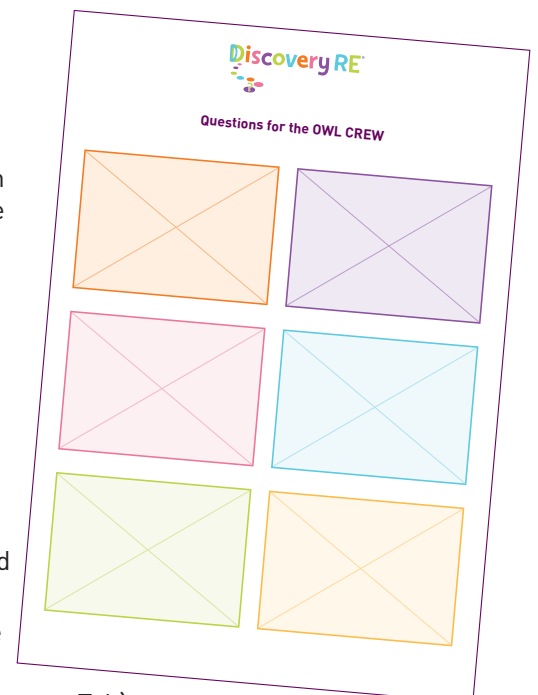
This will help you with ongoing assessment, giving insight into the children's thinking.

b) The OWLS can ask the children questions i.e. the big enquiry question, and any other questions that may support their learning through the enquiry.

c) The OWLS can give the children information e.g. Gudrun Owl would like you to watch this video clip/to explore these artefacts.

d) The OWLS can act as the 'talking object' when you are using Circle Time to discuss opinions and thoughts on issues being studied.

e) You will find images of the Owl Crew on the Community Area (Resources Tab) that may be helpful for displays etc.





Assessment in Discovery RE

Mindful that the majority of agreed syllabi for RE around the country used to align themselves to the 2 attainment target and 8-level scale system of assessing children’s RE learning, the original edition of Discovery RE followed this pattern in order to be of service to teachers.

Some people are still obliged to follow agreed syllabi containing this system, so Discovery RE continues to reference the 2 attainment targets (albeit teasing out the different aspects of AT2).

However, mindful of the current educational landscape, we also offer an alternative colour-coded system:

- **End of key stage age-related expectations** for KS1, lower KS2 and upper KS2.

(Abridged NCFRE (National Curriculum Framework for RE) showing the 3 strands A, B and C.)

Attainment related to end of KS statements	Reference to 'old' level descriptors	A. Investigate the beliefs and practices of religions and other world views	B. Investigate how religions and other world views address questions of meaning, purpose and value	C. Investigate how religions and other world views influence morality, identity and diversity
End of KS1 (Year 2 Age 7)	2	Retell, recognise and find meanings	Explore and respond sensitively	Begin to express ideas and opinions
End of Lower KS2 (Year 4 Age 9)	3	Describe, discover more and respond thoughtfully	Observe and suggest reasons	Suggest reasons and respond thoughtfully
End of KS2 (Year 6 Age 11)	4	Reflect and make connections between different ideas	Consider, compare and contrast	Offer ideas and clear responses

- **3 age-related expectation descriptors for each enquiry in each year group.** These expectations (working AT, TOWARDS and BEYOND) give guidance for assessing each of the 3 aspects of learning involved and made explicit in Discovery RE. Schools can, of course, use the language of their choice to describe these expectations (e.g. developing, secure, exceeding) in order to ensure RE is in line with the school’s system.

The 3 aspects of learning are colour-coded:

Green: personal resonance with or reflection on... (formerly AT2 personal)

Blue: knowledge and understanding of... (formerly AT1)

Red: evaluation/critical thinking in relation to the enquiry question (formerly AT2 impersonal).

AfL (assessment for learning) opportunities are offered throughout each step of each enquiry.

This colour coding starts with steps 1-4 on the planning, each box being framed in the colour that denotes the focus of learning in that step.

The colours continue in the Activity Sheets so the teacher can see which activity is focused on which aspect of learning, and follow this through in the expectation descriptors (Working TOWARDS, Working AT and Working BEYOND) and in the exemplification. This will make it easier to link teaching with learning outcomes, as RE is a complex subject to assess.

End of Key Stage colour-coded descriptors in Discovery RE

<p>“WORKING AT” expectation.</p> <p>Most children are expected to reach these expectations.</p>	<p>GREEN DESCRIPTORS</p> <p>Personal resonance with or reflection on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept / belief underlying the subject matter of the enquiry Child’s own thoughts, opinions, belief, empathy. 	<p>BLUE DESCRIPTORS</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of the subject matter of that enquiry (subject knowledge)</p>	<p>RED DESCRIPTORS</p> <p>Skills of evaluation and critical thinking in relation to the big enquiry question</p>
<p>End of Key Stage 1 (Year 2, Age 7, ‘old’ Level 2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can tell you / talk about what concepts like belonging, commitment, kindness, forgiveness mean to me in my world I can verbalise and / or express my own thoughts 	<p>I can recall facts about the religions / beliefs I have studied, begin to use the religious vocabulary and start to explain the significance and meaning of the facts, practices etc.</p>	<p>I can start to think through the enquiry question using some facts and am beginning to see there could be more than one answer.</p>
<p>End of LOWER key Stage 2 (Year 4, Age 9, ‘old’ Level 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can tell you / talk about the concept / belief e.g. belonging and start to relate this to the people I am studying e.g. Jews. I can express my own opinions and start to support them with rationale. 	<p>I can recall facts about religions I have studied, select the facts that are most significant to the enquiry and start to explain their relevance / importance.</p>	<p>I can apply my knowledge to the enquiry question and give an answer supported by one or more facts.</p>
<p>End of Key Stage 2 (Year 6, Age 11, ‘old’ Level 4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can explain how the concept / belief e.g. forgiveness resonates in my own life and can also see this might be different for other people because of their religion/ beliefs I can express my own thoughts etc having reflected on them in relation to other people’s. 	<p>I can recall facts about religions and explain differences in practice and interpretation within and between religions / belief systems.</p>	<p>I can weigh up evidence and different arguments / aspects relevant to the enquiry question and express my answer, supported with evidence / rationale.</p>



Discovery RE and Church of England Schools

Christianity is taught in every year group in Discovery RE and the enquiry approach adds challenge, requiring children to retain knowledge and apply it to the big question using their critical thinking skills.

Each enquiry addresses an aspect of Christian theology, sometimes explicitly using the theological language and sometimes laying foundations of experience and understanding which will later facilitate learning the explicit theology. To ensure church schools using Discovery RE are confident they are teaching enough Christianity to satisfy their SIAMS requirements, Discovery RE has additional (optional) Christianity enquiries, one in each of years 4, 5 and 6 and a further 6 on the Community Area.

Discovery RE and 'Understanding Christianity'

Mindful of the 'Understanding Christianity' materials, launched in 2016, which emphasise theological literacy, gaining knowledge and interpreting source texts in order to enhance children's holistic understanding of Christianity, each Christianity enquiry in Discovery RE has the underpinning Christian concept/core belief made explicit. These are aligned with the 'Understanding Christianity' materials. Each enquiry also has source texts that can be studied in Step 2 and Teacher Background Knowledge sheets (on the Community Area) that have further texts cited.

Discovery RE is pleased to work co-operatively with the 'Understanding Christianity' Project. The Church of England recommends its schools use the UC materials to deliver Christianity work in RE, and has shown how this might be done in schools already using Discovery RE. www.churchofengland.org

This is also on the Discovery RE Community Area.

If church schools choose to substitute some of the Discovery RE enquiries on Christianity with UC units, these can sit comfortably in the holistic programme of Discovery RE, which gives a whole-school structure for RE including coverage of 6 religions other than Christianity plus Humanism, and using a consistent, developmental approach.

Discovery RE has been proven to support our church schools in improving and maintaining high quality outcomes for our children. Research under the preceding SIAMS inspection framework showed that over 94% received grades of "good" or "outstanding" since implementing Discovery RE and many inspectors' comments showed that Discovery RE was and is already fulfilling many criteria under the 2018 inspection framework. See our article '[How does Discovery RE support the 2018 SIAMS inspection framework?](#)' and our research article '[Does Discovery RE work for Church of England Schools?](#)'

Discovery RE and Catholic Schools

Discovery RE, by its very nature as a progressive and comprehensive set of RE planning, is in no way, denominational. Because of this, and due to the fact that it is a medium term planning tool, no part of it contradicts the aims and objectives of the religious education curriculum in Catholic schools.

In such schools, specific elements need to be included in the RE programme in line with Canon Law, advice, guidance and the support of the Diocesan Bishop and Catholic Education Service. Teachers can therefore use Discovery RE and tailor it to fulfil the expectation that, 'in religious education in particular, the Church aims to transmit (to children) the Catholic faith'.

The Bishops' Statement also states that through Religious Education and the general life of the school, "young people are prepared to serve as witnesses to moral and spiritual values in the wider world".

The philosophy of Discovery RE is clearly in line with this,

"children's ...knowledge and understanding of, and empathy with people and their beliefs, religious or otherwise, will be enhanced."

As stated by the Catholic Bishops' Conference:

"The outcome for religious education is religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity- to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life". (Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic schools page 10).



Discovery RE and the English National Curriculum

RE is statutory and sits alongside the national curriculum. However, it serves not only the SMSC and British values agendas but also contributes significantly to literacy skills as well as linking easily to many areas of the national curriculum.

The article, 'Discovery RE and the national curriculum' shows the possible links. See www.discoveryschemeofwork.com or contact us to receive this article.

Support for Discovery RE schools www.discoveryschemeofwork.com

We offer the website to you as an ongoing hub of support. You are welcome to contribute; just contact us through the website. Termly newsletters, fresh articles and additional resources are added regularly. We will alert you by email.

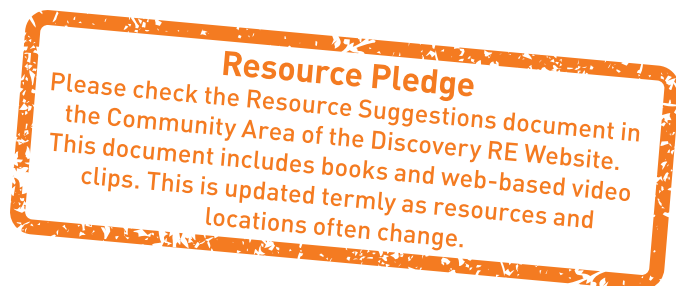
We do our best to offer ongoing support to schools using Discovery RE by:

- Offering each school a mentor, always on hand to answer any questions and offer support and advice
- Giving passworded access to the Discovery RE Community Area on the website

Free update policy

Books, websites and learning clips.

Although Discovery RE is medium-term planning, we do our best to suggest teaching resources that may be helpful. However, because these may change, become unavailable etc. over time, we recommend you check the Community Area of the website where we will post updated resource lists at the end of each half-term. Contact elaine@janleverage.com. Check website www.discoveryschemeofwork.com, log in with your password to the Community Area and look in the Resources section for Updated Resource List.





Our Philosophy

Our belief is that, using an enquiry-based model well, children's 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 children 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.

Discovery RE is a thoughtful and creative set of RE planning for the whole Primary school, F1/2 to Year 6.

We hope it makes teachers' lives easier and short-cuts the planning process, freeing them to design exciting and challenging teaching/learning activities for each lesson/enquiry.

Thanks go to teachers: Hayley Lynam, Dawn Murray, Karen Hunnisett, Hannah Rees and Sian Pell whose enthusiasm for RE and children's learning, willingness to spend many hours on this project and share their current classroom experience, have helped me to make Discovery RE a relevant and creative teaching resource.

Thanks also go to Discovery RE Consultants, David Rees and Alison Harris who, with me, bring a collective 80+ years of RE experience to Discovery RE.

We hope our work supports you to keep improving children's learning in and deepening their thinking through Religious Education.

Jan Lever MBE

B.Ed (Hons), MA, Adv. Dip. Couns.

jan@janlevergroup.com

+44 (0)1202 377193

The Jan Lever Group comprises 2 companies supporting children and young people's wellbeing and development:

Discovery RE www.discoveryschemeofwork.com

Jigsaw PSHE www.jigsawpshe.com

