

# Discovery RE<sup>®</sup>

The **enquiry-based** approach to  
**Religious Education** for F1 to Year 6



[www.discoveryschemeofwork.com](http://www.discoveryschemeofwork.com)

© Copyright of this document is the property of Jan Lever. The purchase of this copyright material confers the right on the purchasing institution to copy it for educational use within that, and no other, institution. No part of this document may be reprinted or reproduced in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, for use in any other institution or by any individual, without permission in writing from Jan Lever.



Tel: +44 (0)1202 377193 Email: [jan@janlevergroup.com](mailto:jan@janlevergroup.com)  
[www.discoveryschemeofwork.com](http://www.discoveryschemeofwork.com)





## The Scheme of Learning for Religious Education in the Primary School

### Introduction

Translating an agreed syllabus for RE into a well-ordered, progressive, easy to use Scheme of Learning is never an easy task, even for RE specialists. How will I find the time to do all this new planning? Which religions shall we teach when? What is the weighting to be given to Christianity and the other religions? What about the 2 attainment targets, how do they fit together? How far do we have to go with the 'enquiry-based approach?' Have we got the resources necessary to teach the new syllabus? I don't have a budget! We have just got the old syllabus sorted out and they change it! What about children's spiritual development? What about SMSC? What about the British Values Agenda?

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. Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism are also covered. Humanist perspectives are added when most appropriate in some enquiries.

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

The planning model used in Discovery RE is aligned to that recommended in most agreed syllabi, i.e. a 6-part planning process focusing on a 4-step enquiry. 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.

Discovery RE's contribution to British Values has been mapped and this document can be downloaded from [www.discoveryschemeofwork.com](http://www.discoveryschemeofwork.com)

October 2013 saw the publication of 2 significant documents of national relevance to the RE world:

- 1) 'Religious Education: realising the potential', the Ofsted report describing the picture relating to RE across the country as reflected from the RE-subject inspections of the previous 3 years.
- 2) 'The National Framework for Religious Education', from the Religious Education Council after the RE curriculum review.

**[www.discoveryschemeofwork.com](http://www.discoveryschemeofwork.com)** has articles showing how these documents and the issues and expectations within them, are addressed by Discovery RE.

We are delighted that Discovery RE fulfils the requirements of both the approach and content set out in the National Framework 2013, and that it contributes very significantly to addressing the weaknesses outlined in the Ofsted report's key findings, not least providing a straightforward and comprehensive assessment process.

**We are happy to map and match Discovery RE to your locally agreed syllabus should it be reassuring to see exactly how the two align and how fully Discovery RE meets your syllabus' requirements.**

**See [www.discoveryschemeofwork.com](http://www.discoveryschemeofwork.com) and [www.janlevereducationconsultancy.com](http://www.janlevereducationconsultancy.com)**

## The Enquiry-based Approach

### The 4-step enquiry

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.

#### 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. If they can relate to the 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).

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

**Investigation:** The teacher guides the children through the enquiry, children gaining subject knowledge (the factual base about the religion), 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.

#### 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 task sheet and resources are included) which the teacher can assess by using the Level descriptors at the end of each enquiry. The levels are exemplified and tracking and record sheets are included, as are pupil self-assessment sheets.

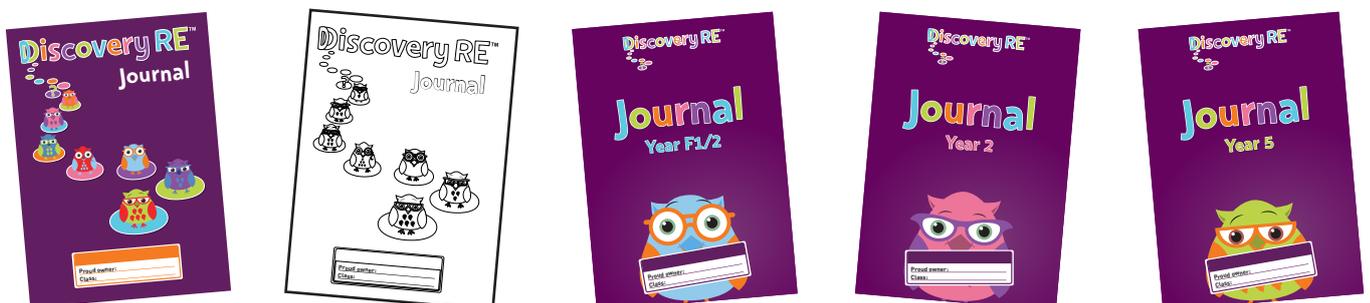
These ‘I can’ level descriptors (based on the national 8-level scale) may well lend themselves to meaningful and less onerous report writing, with evidence in children’s books from every Evaluation (Step 3) lesson. Alternative assessment processes are also offered, taking account of the ‘Beyond Levels’ landscape.

#### 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 point/beliefs, etc. There is often further evidence for their books produced in this lesson.

Children’s progress is best recorded in individual journals or portfolios, but the whole learning experience of the class may be gathered into a class Discovery RE Portfolio.

Discovery RE journal/portfolio covers can be downloaded from the CDRom.





[www.discoveryschemeofwork.com](http://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.

### **SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) development**

With the Ofsted inspection framework emphasising the opportunities children are offered for SMSC development, RE can be a key contributor. Therefore, SMSC opportunities are identified in each enquiry, and are mapped on the overview grid for each year group. Further support for SMSC can be found on [www.janlevereducationconsultancy.com](http://www.janlevereducationconsultancy.com)

### **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. DiscoveryRE contributes significantly to the British Values Agenda and the mapping document on the website shows this.

### **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.

### **Assessment in Discovery RE**

Mindful that the majority of agreed syllabi for RE around the country aligned 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.

Knowing that many people are still obliged to follow agreed syllabi containing this system, Discovery RE will continue to include the 2 attainment targets (albeit teasing out the different aspects of AT2) and assessment tasks and descriptors which reflect these.

However, also mindful of the education landscape 'beyond levels' we will shortly offer an alternative system.

- End of key stage expectations for KS1, lower KS2 and upper KS2. This is similar to the RE Council non-statutory framework for RE (2013) which also suggests end of KS expectations.
- 3 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, excelling) 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...**

**Blue: knowledge and understanding of...**

**Red: evaluation/critical thinking in relation to the enquiry question.**

These will be alongside the original AT1 and 2 descriptors in the 'My Learning Progress' grids at the beginning of each year group's section, the RE Tracking Sheet directly after these, as well as in the 'I can' statements in each enquiry.

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



### 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.

Mindful of the national reviews suggesting theological concepts need to be given deeper treatment in order to enhance children's holistic understanding of Christianity, each Christianity enquiry has the underpinning Christian concept made explicit.

There is a need for the teacher to ensure his own understanding of this is adequate before embarking on delivering the enquiry, and this applies to the preparation and delivery of all the enquiries, not just the Christianity ones.

SIAMS inspections seek additionality from church schools. See the article on [www.discoveryschemeofwork](http://www.discoveryschemeofwork) for help with this.

### Discovery RE and Catholic Schools

Discovery RE, by its very nature as a progressive and comprehensive scheme of work, is in no way, shape or form denominational. However, 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 curriculum religious education in Catholic schools.

Specific elements in line with canon law, and through the advice, guidance and support of the Diocesan Bishop and the Catholic Education Service, can and should be included by teachers planning individual lessons from the scheme of work. This allows Catholic schools to utilise Discovery RE whilst still fulfilling the expectation that "in religious education in particular, the Church aims to transmit to [children] the Catholic faith."

The Bishops' Statement, however, 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 as stated in the Introduction to Discovery RE:

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

SMSC is also mapped in every enquiry ensuring that children's moral and spiritual development is nurtured.

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*).

"Excellence in religious education, then, will be characterised by a clarity of succinct religious learning objectives and of key content, by appropriate methodologies, rigour, richness of resources, achievement of identified outcomes and accurate methods of assessment. Classroom Religious Education will be a challenging educational engagement between the pupil, the teacher and the authentic subject material." (Statement on Religious Education in Catholic Schools, issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (7), 5th May 2000).



Discovery RE fulfils all of the above criteria by supplying meaningful and challenging enquiry questions to investigate rigorously through the Step 2 section of the planning cycle, a variety of resources to enrich the children's experience and understanding, clearly stated and identifiable outcomes, and full support for assessment covering both expected outcomes for age ranges and the previous format of assessment levels (AT 1 and 2) for those schools still wishing to use them. The enquiry approach, in itself, ensures (when taught well) "challenging educational engagement between the pupil, the teacher and the authentic subject material".

### **Discovery RE and the National Curriculum**

RE is statutory and sits outside 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](http://www.discoveryschemeofwork.com) or contact us to receive this article.

### **The Big Discovery RE**

Many requests from teachers have led me, with the DiscoveryRE team, to start to convert the Discovery RE that you have in front of you now, into a full set of lesson plans with all the teaching resources needed to deliver them. Watch the website for dates and details. The Big Discovery RE will integrate mindfulness practices into every lesson, and include an act of collective worship with each enquiry.

### **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.

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

### **Jan Lever**

[jan@janlevergroup.com](mailto:jan@janlevergroup.com)

+44 (0)1202 377192

[www.janlevereducationconsultancy.com](http://www.janlevereducationconsultancy.com)

[www.discoveryschemeofwork.com](http://www.discoveryschemeofwork.com)

Overview Years F1/2 to Year 6

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2	
F1/2	<p><b>Theme:</b> Special People <b>Key Question:</b> What makes people special? <b>Religions:</b> Christianity, Islam, Judaism</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Christmas <b>Key Question:</b> What is Christmas? <b>Religions:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Celebrations <b>Key Question:</b> How do people celebrate? <b>Religions:</b> Islam, Judaism</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Easter <b>Key Question:</b> What is Easter? <b>Religions:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Story Time <b>Key Question:</b> What can we learn from stories? <b>Religions:</b> Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Special Places <b>Key Question:</b> What makes places special? <b>Religions:</b> Christianity, Islam, Judaism</p>	
1	<p><b>Theme:</b> Creation Story <b>Key Question:</b> Does God want Christians to look after the world? <b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Christmas Story <b>Key Question:</b> What gift would I have given to Jesus if he had been born in my town not in Bethlehem? <b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Jesus as a friend <b>Key Question:</b> Was it always easy for Jesus to show friendship? <b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Easter-Palm Sunday <b>Key Question:</b> Why was Jesus welcomed like a king or celebrity by the crowds on Palm Sunday? <b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Shabbat <b>Key Question:</b> Is Shabbat important to Jewish children? <b>Religion:</b> Judaism</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Chanukah <b>Key Question:</b> Does celebrating Chanukah make Jewish children feel close to God? <b>Religion:</b> Judaism</p>	
2	<p><b>Areas of Focus:</b> Believing <b>Theme:</b> What did Jesus teach? <b>Key Question:</b> Is it possible to be kind to everyone all of the time? <b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Christmas-Jesus as gift from God <b>Key Question:</b> Why did God give Jesus to the world? <b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Passover <b>Key Question:</b> How important is it for Jewish people to do what God asks them to do? <b>Religion:</b> Judaism</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Easter; resurrection <b>Key Question:</b> Is it true that Jesus came back to life again? <b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> The Covenant <b>Key Question:</b> How special is the relationship Jews have with God? <b>Religion:</b> Judaism</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Rites of Passage and good works <b>Key Question:</b> What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God? <b>Religion:</b> Judaism</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Hajj <b>Key Question:</b> Does completing Hajj make a person a better Muslim? <b>Religion:</b> Islam</p>

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
3	<p><b>Theme:</b> Diwali</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Would celebrating Diwali at home and in the community bring a feeling of belonging to a Hindu child?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Hinduism</p> <p><b>*Theme:</b> The Amrit Ceremony and the Khalsa</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Does joining the Khalsa make a person a better Sikh?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Sikhism</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Christmas</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Has Christmas lost its true meaning?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Jesus' Miracles</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Could Jesus really heal people? Were these miracles or is there some other explanation?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Easter - Forgiveness</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> What is 'good' about Good Friday?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>*Theme:</b> Hindu Beliefs</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> How can Brahman be everywhere and in everything?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Hinduism</p> <p><b>*Theme:</b> Sharing and Community</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Do Sikhs think it is important to share?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Sikhism</p>	<p><b>*Theme:</b> Pilgrimage to the River Ganges</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Would visiting the River Ganges feel special to a non-Hindu?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Hinduism</p> <p><b>*Theme:</b> Prayer and Worship</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Sikhism</p>
4	<p><b>Theme:</b> Beliefs and Practices</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> How special is the relationship Jews have with God?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Judaism</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Christmas</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> What is the most significant part of the nativity story for Christians today?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Passover</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> How important is it for Jewish people to do what God asks them to do?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Judaism</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Easter</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Is forgiveness always possible?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Rites of Passage and good works</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Judaism</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Prayer and Worship</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Do people need to go to church to show they are Christians?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>
5	<p><b>*Theme:</b> Belief into action</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> How far would a Sikh go for his/her religion?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Sikhism</p> <p><b>*Theme:</b> Prayer and Worship</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> What is the best way for a Hindu to show commitment to God?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Hinduism</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Christmas</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Is the Christmas story true?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>*Theme:</b> Beliefs and moral values</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Are Sikh stories important today?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Sikhism</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Easter</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Did God intend Jesus to be crucified?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>*Theme:</b> Beliefs and moral values</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Do beliefs in Karma, Samsara and Moksha help Hindus lead good lives?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Hinduism</p>	<p><b>*Theme:</b> Beliefs and Practices</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> What is the best way for a Christian to show commitment to God?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>
6	<p><b>Theme:</b> Beliefs and Practices</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> What is the best way for a Muslim to show commitment to God?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Islam</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Christmas</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> How significant is it that Mary was Jesus' mother?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Beliefs and Meaning</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Is anything ever eternal?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Easter</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Is Christianity still a strong religion 2000 years after Jesus was on Earth?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Beliefs and moral values</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> Does belief in Akhirah (life after death) help Muslims lead good lives?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Islam <i>NB: This enquiry is taught over a term</i></p>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Beliefs and Practices</p> <p><b>Key Question:</b> What is the best way for a Christian to show commitment to God?</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Christianity</p>