

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs N Panayis
Headteacher
Godwin Junior School
Cranmer Road
Forest Gate
London
E7 0JW

Dear Mrs Panayis

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: religious education (RE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 25 November 2010 to look at work in RE.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of RE is good.

Achievement in RE

Achievement in RE is good.

- Progress in RE is good, primarily because of effective teaching and pupils' positive attitudes to learning. By the end of Key Stage 2 the standard of work in RE is in line with attainment overall in the school, and with expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge of religions. In their early work in RE they are beginning to recognise that the beliefs and practices of religious communities are important to believers; for example, in the lower phase they are already showing a basic understanding of why the Bible is important for Christians and can describe some of the

practices which show its significance for believers. In Key Stage 2 in particular, they understand and are articulate about the importance of what they are learning for themselves and for their school and local community. For example, they can show how a sense of belonging is expressed in different religious communities and consider some of the implications of what they learn for their own experiences and ideas.

- RE strongly supports pupils' personal development. They enjoy their work and are keen to find out more about people and communities around them. They have a very positive attitude to difference and diversity and understand the importance of mutual respect. They also recognise that it is important to respect people who do not have a religious faith or commitment. They are good at listening to each other when such views are expressed.

Quality of teaching of RE

The quality of teaching of RE is good.

- The school has invested time and effort in improving the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum. This has benefited learning in RE. Lessons are well-planned with clear objectives, they are linked effectively with a variety of activities and address the varied needs and abilities of pupils. Consequently, pupils' interest is engaged from the beginning of lessons through imaginative starters, and their learning is consolidated with effective summaries. Teachers' own subject knowledge is increasing which helps their confidence in dealing with pupils' questions, but the school is aware of the need to help them develop their understanding further, particularly in relation to matters of diversity within particular communities.
- In the observed lessons, teaching was judged to be good because teachers had a clear understanding of their goals and were able to deploy an effective range of approaches and techniques to engage pupils in learning. This was done particularly well in a Year 4 lesson where reading a very well-selected contemporary story helped pupils to discuss the factors which make particular books important for believers.
- Pupils' work in RE is monitored and assessed effectively. Their written work is supported by helpful comments and questions, usually but not always targeted at developing their subject understanding. Formal assessments take place regularly and are based on the extent to which pupils are able to show a developing mastery of a topic.

Quality of the curriculum in RE

The quality of the curriculum in RE is good.

- The RE curriculum has been developed in line with the locally agreed syllabus. The school's schemes of work are thorough and clear and have benefited from guidance given by the local authority and SACRE. The

school has used the local authority's programmes of study flexibly and imaginatively. From these, schemes of work have been developed which are focused on challenging outcomes to meet the needs of the pupils at this school, who are from diverse backgrounds. This is a particularly good example of implementing an agreed syllabus effectively.

- Medium-term plans provide guidance for teachers in relation to key questions, concepts and learning outcomes, while allowing them flexibility to develop their own lessons, with support from the subject coordinator.
- Again with the support of the local authority, the school provides good opportunities for pupils to visit a variety of local places of worship. These enrichment activities could be further developed by extending opportunities for community representatives to visit the school and talk to pupils.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in RE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is good.

- Within the school RE receives good support from senior management which ensures that there are effective systems and processes for monitoring the quality of teaching. The subject has clear targets for development in line with the emphasis in the school as a whole to improve the quality of learning and to support pupils of all abilities.
- Very good relationships with the local authority support services ensure that the subject leadership is further developed through training opportunities. The school benefits from having one of its pupils serving as a junior SACRE member.
- As well as encouraging pupils to develop an informed understanding of different religious points of view, the school leadership is also concerned that provision should be made in the curriculum for those whose families do not belong to such communities. They believe it is important that their views should also be considered, in line with the guidance contained in the locally agreed syllabus.
- The school has good potential for further development in RE, and is well prepared to assimilate the forthcoming revisions to the locally agreed syllabus.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- considering how to accommodate the views of those who do not belong to families with a religious background within the RE curriculum
- ensuring that all teachers have further opportunities to develop their own subject knowledge and understanding in RE
- creating opportunities for visits by representatives of local religious communities to contribute to learning in RE.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop RE in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and SACRE and will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Rudge
Additional Inspector