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Mrs S Lymn-Brewin
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Dear Mrs Lymn-Brewin

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 14 March 2011 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with pupils and staff; 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.

- Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with the expectations set out in the Nottinghamshire agreed syllabus, representing good progress overall for the majority. They are able to draw together their learning well about religions that they study. They understand the connections between belief and practice and can explain the impact that religion makes on people's lives. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson on the prodigal son and the story of Zacchaeus, pupils were able to identify the importance of forgiveness and its application in everyday life, based on their own experiences.

- Pupils also make at least satisfactory progress in RE across Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, they can identify a range of different religions and recognise how beliefs are shown through, for example, the celebration of festivals and practices in places of worship.
- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make equally good progress across the subject. The abilities of older pupils to undertake more independent enquiries into religion and to link their study of religion and belief to their own experiences are less well developed.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. RE makes a significant contribution to the school's drive to achieve respect for diversity and equality. Pupils are aware of the importance of understanding religious, social and cultural diversity in the locality and in the wider world. Pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons and they model respect for the views of others.

Quality of teaching of RE

The quality of teaching of RE is good.

- Lessons are well organised and managed. Pupils are aware of the purpose of their learning. Careful attention is paid to ensure that they are actively engaged, for example through pair, small group and also independent learning. Teachers use questioning well to check the pupils' progress and stimulate discussion.
- A broad range of resources is used to enliven learning, including artefacts, information and communication technology and tasks that match pupils' different needs.
- Assessment procedures are secure and developing well. A broad range of 'I can' statements extends the agreed syllabus expectations and provides teachers and pupils with evidence to monitor pupils' progress and to report confidently to parents. Pupils' work is marked regularly. Ongoing teachers' assessments enable them to adjust planning and teaching. However, there is no formal method to calibrate teachers' assessment to ensure consistency across the school.

Quality of the curriculum in RE

The quality of the curriculum in RE is good.

- The curriculum has been adjusted to take full account of the revised agreed syllabus. A comprehensive scheme of work is in place which provides a suitable basis for helping to secure consistency of practice. Schemes of work are detailed and joint lesson planning enables teachers to ensure that pupils' learning is progressively built on prior learning and that the breadth of religions are covered in sufficient detail.
- A flexible approach towards the subject is adopted. Teaching is mostly undertaken weekly in half-termly units and opportunities for cross-curricular links are clearly identified.

- School leaders' own monitoring of lessons shows that there are some effective examples of enquiry-based learning, providing opportunities for pupils to express their own views, linked to the religions and beliefs they study. However, these opportunities are not overtly identified in medium-term plans.
- The provision for RE is supported well through a range of visitors and visits, including visits to the local church. Assemblies complement learning about different religions and celebrations well.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in RE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is good.

- The subject benefits from strong subject leadership which is well supported by the senior leaders. There is a commitment to high standards and improvement reflected in the well-considered subject action plan.
- The subject leader is enthusiastic about RE and ensures that teachers are supported well, for example, through guidance about resources. Staff discussions help to share effective practice and how further improvements can be made.
- Monitoring activities, such as scrutiny of pupils' work and planning, provide a secure picture of provision and ensure continuous improvement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the curriculum has a more balanced focus on 'learning about' and 'learning from' religion so that pupils can demonstrate their skills consistently as reflective learners
- developing a range of ways, including an evaluation of pupils' written work, to support teachers' assessment procedures.

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

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector