

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



29 March 2011

Mr P Rust
Acting Headteacher
Walesby CofE Primary School
New Hill
Walesby
Newark
NG22 9PB

Dear Mr Rust

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 17 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 satisfactory.

Achievement in RE

Achievement in RE is satisfactory.

- Overall, pupils make generally satisfactory progress across the school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children show an interest in aspects of celebration, such as harvest and Diwali. Children have a growing sense of belonging to their families and the school and are able to talk about special people and places. Pupils in Year 2 can explain the importance of festivals, such as Easter, and the role of fasting or giving up cherished things during Lent. The attainment of pupils by the end of Year 6 is just below the expectations set out in the Nottinghamshire agreed syllabus. Over their time in school, pupils develop a broad knowledge and understanding of a range of different religions, with a sounder grasp of

some Christian beliefs and practices. However, their ability to investigate, analyse and apply their skills is limited because of weaknesses in planning. Opportunities for pupils to 'learn from' religion are insufficient.

- Pupils also make satisfactory progress 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.
- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make equally satisfactory progress across the subject. Pupils' skills in undertaking more independent enquiries into religion and linking 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. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and can explain why it is important to show respect for religious and cultural diversity.

Quality of teaching of RE

The quality of teaching of RE is satisfactory with some good features.

- Lessons are well organised and managed. Teachers make the purpose of learning clear to pupils and plenaries, at the end of lessons, are effective in enabling pupils and teachers to assess the success of learning.
- Teachers use good stimulating activities to engage pupils' interest and resources are generally matched well to their different needs. Tasks in pairs and small groups also enable pupils to access learning well. This was evident in both the lessons observed. A broad range of resources is used to enliven learning, including information and communication technology.
- Generally, however, lessons do not provide enough challenge for pupils to investigate the connections between different religions and to explore their own ideas about key religious beliefs and practices.
- A simple assessment structure is in place. A range of 'I can' statements, adapted from the agreed syllabus expectations, is beginning to provide a more formal picture of how well pupils progress in their learning. More widely, the use of assessment as a diagnostic tool to inform planning and monitoring of individual pupils' progress is underdeveloped.

Quality of the curriculum in RE

The quality of the curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is being adjusted to take full account of the revised agreed syllabus. An overview provides a helpful outline of the breadth of the RE curriculum and medium-term plans are being developed further to ensure that a clear pattern of progression is built into the pupils' learning.
- More effective lesson plans helpfully identify key questions to be explored in detail, using suggestions from units of work provided as guidance

materials in the agreed syllabus. However, this quality of planning and delivery is inconsistent across the school.

- On occasions, the pattern of delivery of RE, which is usually in weekly sessions, is adjusted to allow for more sustained work and encourage stronger cross-curricular links.
- The use of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' learning is limited. Good use is made of the local church, but pupils' experiences of other religious places of worship and people are not as extensive.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in RE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is satisfactory with good features.

- The recently appointed subject leader provides strong leadership. The commitment to high standards and improvement is 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.
- The subject makes a positive contribution to the overall ethos of respect evident in the school and to the promotion of community cohesion.
- Monitoring activities, such as scrutiny of pupils' work and planning, provide a good picture of provision and action already taken indicates that capacity for continuous improvement is good.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising standards by providing more challenge for pupils, including developing their enquiry skills
- 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