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Mr P Nolan  
Headteacher  
Annesley Primary and Nursery School  
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Nottingham  
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Dear Mr Nolan

**Ofsted 2011–12 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 27 June 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 staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of RE is satisfactory.

**Achievement in RE**

Achievement in RE is satisfactory.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children show an interest in aspects of celebrations and festivals such as Easter and Diwali. Children have a strong sense of belonging to their families and school and generally talk confidently about special places and people. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are able to identify the importance of the Bible for Christians and suggest meanings for religious stories and parables.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are below the Nottinghamshire agreed syllabus expectations. In part, this reflects a lack of continuity in their teaching for the subject. However, pupils' overall progress from their starting points is satisfactory. Pupils are able to describe the impact of beliefs on people's lifestyles and able to describe

the key elements of religions that they have studied across Key Stage 2. Pupils' ability to describe and explain similarities and differences between different religions is underdeveloped, and their ability to relate religious material to their own experiences is variable.

- The contribution of RE to pupils' personal development is satisfactory and has some good features. Pupils are mostly enthusiastic learners and settle down to tasks willingly, cooperating well in small groups. Pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject and appreciate the importance of valuing religious and cultural diversity.

### **Quality of teaching in RE**

The quality of teaching in RE is satisfactory.

- Typically, lessons are planned well and teachers make the purpose of the learning clear to children and pupils. The focus on developing speaking and listening skills, as well as practising writing skills through work done in RE, enables pupils to demonstrate such skills confidently.
- A reasonable range of resources and strategies is used to engage pupils' interest. They are keen to ask questions and, when they have the opportunity to find things out for themselves and present their own ideas, pupils respond readily. This was evident, for example, in Year 4 pupils' work on Hindu beliefs and practices and the story of Noah. However, the use of such enquiry-based learning is not extensive and this limits opportunities for pupils to show their initiative and demonstrate their independence in learning.
- While there are examples of some pupils progressing well in aspects of their learning, they do not always have enough opportunities to investigate connections between different religions and belief. There is also scope to extend the opportunities for pupils to explore their own ideas about key religious beliefs.
- The use of planning suggested in the agreed syllabus guidance materials identifies some assessment opportunities. The use of statements that pupils themselves might find helpful for self- and peer-assessment is a very recent development in the teaching provision. Generally, assessment arrangements in RE are underdeveloped and pupils do not have a secure view about how well they are doing in the subject.

### **Quality of the curriculum in RE**

The quality of the curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is organised soundly, using the guidance materials suggested to support the implementation of the locally agreed syllabus. Schemes of work are structured so that statutory requirements are met. There are some good units of work which develop pupils' interests and meet their needs well. The best lesson plans helpfully identify key questions to be explored in teaching and learning.

- On occasions, the pattern of delivery of RE, which is generally in weekly sessions, is adjusted to allow for more sustained, in-depth work. Use of external visitors is restricted to Christianity, although this year more use is being made to extend experiences to include a greater diversity of religions and beliefs.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in RE**

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is variable but satisfactory overall.

- You are currently taking an acting role in leading RE. The school recognises that the subject has not benefited from strong leadership in the past but now has plans in place to address this weakness from September 2011.
- Strengths and weaknesses in provision are identified through informal monitoring and evaluation and an action plan has been drawn up to address weaknesses. In particular, clear steps are identified to develop the use of assessment in RE. It is recognised that careful monitoring of the action plan's implementation should be linked to pupils' achievement.
- The subject makes a positive contribution to the overall ethos of respect within the school and its commitment to the promotion of community cohesion.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- extending opportunities for pupils to use more enquiry-based approaches to learning and exploring their own ideas about key religious beliefs so that they can demonstrate how well they learn 'from religion'
- developing the use of assessment so that pupils have a good understanding of how well they are progressing in the subject
- strengthening the quality of monitoring and evaluation so that it leads to improved outcomes for the pupils.

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 published on the Ofsted website and will be sent to SACRE. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Dilip Kadodwala**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**