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5 October 2011

Mr L Biddulph  
Acting Headteacher  
Darley Churchtown CofE Primary School  
Church Road  
Darley Dale  
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Dear Mr Biddulph

### **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 22 September 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 two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of RE is satisfactory.

### **Achievement in RE**

Achievement in RE is satisfactory.

- The standards reached by pupils by the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with the expectations set out in the Derbyshire agreed syllabus. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils can describe the key elements of the religions they have studied, including Christianity. However, pupils are less confident in describing similarities and differences both within and between religions. Although the more able pupils can talk generally about how learning about religions and beliefs can be related to their own lives, this aspect of 'learning from' religion is less well developed across both key stages.
- Pupils' better progress is held back because they have insufficient opportunities to explore their own ideas about key religious beliefs and to

use higher order thinking skills in investigating, interpreting and evaluating religion and belief.

- Pupils generally enjoy RE and recognise the importance of valuing diversity and respecting the opinions of others. The implementation of a 'philosophy for children' approach makes a useful contribution in this regard.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral and spiritual development, reflected also in their very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons.

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

The quality of teaching in RE is satisfactory.

- Lessons are structured and taught in a variety of ways across the key stages. Teachers know their pupils well and use questioning effectively to move learning on in lessons. A variety of approaches is used, including information and communication technology, to enliven learning.
- In both the lessons observed, teachers made links with literacy thereby helping to promote pupils' essential skills. However, the range of skills pupils are required to use does not fully extend to investigating religion and belief.
- Assessment is underdeveloped. Teachers are aware of the agreed syllabus level descriptors but a structured way of using these to monitor pupils' progress has only been introduced very recently.

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

The quality of the curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- The curriculum broadly meets the requirements of the agreed syllabus. Supplementary guidance material is used to inform teachers' planning. The most effective plans identify learning objectives and attention is paid to meeting the needs of different groups of pupils. However, the planning does not always show how pupils' skills of enquiry, investigation and evaluation are to be built on progressively, linked to pupils' conceptual understanding of religion and belief.
- Good use is made of the local church which is a rich resource for learning. The school has recognised that visits to places of worship across a wider range of religions, although made in previous years, need to be reinvigorated. Pupils themselves suggest that meeting people from different religions would help them develop their knowledge and understanding even more.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is satisfactory.

- The leadership of the subject has changed recently. The school rightly judges that RE makes a positive contribution to the overall school ethos of respect and compassion, clearly making a valuable impact on pupils' personal development.
- The arrangements for monitoring are currently too informal but are a priority for improvement. This, along with improving assessment procedures, has helpfully been identified in the subject action plan. There is a strong commitment to raising standards and improving pupils' progress.

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

- improving curriculum planning to secure a consistent and clear focus on the development of learning skills in RE, including 'learning from' religion
- developing a more structured approach to the monitoring of pupils' progress to help teachers make secure assessments about standards reached by the pupils and to enable pupils to have an understanding about their progress in RE
- extending opportunities for visits and visitors from a broader range of religious traditions to help improve pupils' achievement.

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

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

Yours sincerely

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