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Mrs N Anderton  
Headteacher  
Cotwall End Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Anderton

### **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 the 16 November 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 five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of RE is satisfactory.

### **Achievement in RE**

Achievement in RE is satisfactory.

- Pupils make satisfactory progress to reach the standards expected for their age by the end of each key stage. The school has recognised that pupils' progress is uneven across different year groups. In some classes, for example, there is a tendency to focus on pupils recording information about religion rather than investigating and exploring the key concepts of the subject. Nonetheless, pupils are engaged in some higher-level thinking tasks when, for example, expressing their ideas about God in a philosophy session.
- Pupils' ability to explain their 'learning from' religion is often stronger than their 'learning about' religion where written work tends to lack challenge.

## **Quality of teaching in RE**

The quality of teaching in RE is satisfactory.

- Teaching is supported well by a range of resource material and regular and purposeful opportunities for speaking and listening.
- Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge but, occasionally, the lesson activities are not challenging enough, particularly where the purpose of a unit of work is lost and activities become too focused on gathering information rather than prompting enquiry.
- Lessons and other activities are delivered using a range of strategies including information and communication technology, art, drama and some opportunities for pupils to learn independently and from each other.
- Although work is marked, the school is aware that limited progress has been made in implementing more robust assessment arrangements in RE.

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

The quality of the curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- Work in RE takes appropriate account of the current Dudley agreed syllabus. The subject has a secure place within the curriculum. The regular RE lessons are complemented by a range of wider activities including focus days on specific themes and other enrichment activities with sessions on, for example, philosophy. The school has suitable plans to introduce more visits during this academic year.
- The school is keen to explore other models of delivery to provide an opportunity to develop more sustained investigative work. At present, however, the opportunities for pupils to use higher order skills of thinking are not developed consistently across all aspects of the learning in RE.
- The school is trialling the use of levels to help assess pupils' attainment and inform the next steps in pupils' learning. However, as yet these are not being translated consistently into individual lesson plans to support differentiation of the learning.
- RE makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development. Attitudes towards the subject are positive; pupils welcome opportunities to build confidence in their learning. They respond well in discussions and work cooperatively, listening well to each other's point of view.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is satisfactory.

- Appropriate strategies are in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision. A well-focused improvement plan for the subject is in place with a set of clear priorities targeted on improving provision and raising standards.

- The school has plans to redesign the curriculum early in the new year, as a result of its audit of provision. Currently, the curriculum documentation does not provide teachers with enough support or provide a clear basis for much of their planning.

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

- establishing a clearer, more coherent and progressive overall curriculum for RE
- ensuring that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to their learning about religions and beliefs are improved.

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

**Jacqueline Wordsworth**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**