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Mrs H Hutchison
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hutchison

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: religious education (RE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 20 March 2012 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 good.

Achievement in RE

Achievement in RE is good.

- Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with the expectations set out in the Gloucestershire agreed syllabus. From their below average starting points, pupils of all backgrounds and abilities make good progress.
- Pupils have a good grasp of the significance which religion and belief play in people's lives, especially about Christian beliefs and practices. Pupils are increasingly confident in explaining some similarities and differences, for example when learning about creation stories from a range of traditions. This demonstrates pupils' good ability to evaluate a range of views and beliefs. Pupils can reflect on how teachings from religion might apply to their own lives and values. Pupils say that they have good opportunities to express their own views.

- The contribution of RE to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with some outstanding features. It promotes a very positive view of religious and cultural diversity and fosters a sensitive engagement with human feelings and emotions. This is evident, for example, in the work done on Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks. Pupils are very clear that it is important to respect diversity and to challenge things that are wrong in a peaceful manner. As one pupil said, 'the subject makes you think deeper' and another said, 'it changes you'.

Quality of teaching in RE

The quality of teaching in RE is good.

- Lessons are organised, planned and managed well. A questioning approach structures learning well so that pupils have a clear view about what they are learning. This engages their interest and motivation. A range of lively strategies and resources is used with careful attention paid to matching tasks to the pupils' different needs. The successful deployment of teaching assistants and support staff helps to ensure that pupils make good gains in their learning. This was evident in both of the lessons observed.
- Pupils say that lessons are typically engaging. They use good stimulus material such as visual aids, artefacts, texts and 'talk partners' which make learning interesting. They describe behaviour in lessons as very good and this was seen in the lessons observed.
- Assessment is generally fit for purpose. Teachers use suggestions from the agreed syllabus to plan the learning and use ongoing assessment to form a view about how well pupils are developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers provide verbal feedback to pupils and some helpful written comments in their work. However, the quality of reports to parents and carers is variable. The better examples give an indication about how well pupils have attained and made progress but this level of practice is not consistent across the year groups. The use of assessment to keep pupils informed of how well they are progressing is underdeveloped.

Quality of the curriculum in RE

The quality of the curriculum in RE is good.

- The expectations of the agreed syllabus are met in broad terms through planning learning by using topics and themes, some of which are imaginative and creative. Close monitoring of this approach ensures that learning is built on progressively and captures pupils' interest and engagement.
- The provision for RE is enhanced through a range of visitors and visits, including to some local places of worship. Good use is made of adults within the school community, including parents and carers, to help pupils engage with religious and cultural diversity at first-hand. This helps engender a thirst for learning in pupils and impacts well on their personal

development. Pupils themselves are happy to talk about their beliefs and values.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in RE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is good.

- The subject benefits from strong leadership which is supported well by the senior leadership team. The subject leader is enthusiastic and supportive of staff teaching RE. The overall monitoring of planning, teaching and pupils' work and regular discussions with pupils give staff and governors an accurate and comprehensive picture of strengths and weaknesses. Action already undertaken indicates a good capacity for continuous improvement.
- Opportunities for professional development are taken judiciously and help to maintain staff's confidence and expertise. A local resource centre is used well to access materials to augment teaching.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that there is consistency in the quality of reports to parents and carers about pupils' attainment and progress in RE
- developing further pupils' understanding about how well they are progressing in the subject.

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