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Mr K Kies
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Dear Mr Kies

Ofsted 2012–13 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 2 May 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 inadequate.

Achievement in RE

Achievement in RE is inadequate.

- Achievement is inadequate at both key stages because provision is insufficient to enable pupils to gain more than superficial knowledge and understanding of religion and belief or make satisfactory progress in the subject.
- Year 2 pupils know some basic facts about Christianity but their knowledge of other religions is very weak. Pupils in Key Stage 2 do not extend their knowledge of religion sufficiently and rarely have the opportunity to apply higher level skills to the subject.
- When the opportunity arises, pupils show considerable interest in and enthusiasm for RE. While pupils benefit from opportunities to reflect on

issues of meaning and purpose, these reflections rarely take place in relation to the context of their learning in RE.

Quality of teaching in RE

The quality of teaching in RE is inadequate

- In the two lessons seen during the visit, pupils made at least satisfactory progress and in one lesson, progress was outstanding. In this lesson, resources were used effectively to enable pupils to work independently and in groups. The sensitive exploration of beliefs about death enabled pupils to make strong links between their study of religions and their thinking about issues that concerned them.
- However, teaching is inadequate overall because its impact over time does not secure the necessary gains in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers do not plan and deliver RE to enable pupils to identify any connections between their study of religion and belief and their exploration of more personal reflections on issues of meaning and purpose.
- Across the school, teachers' subject expertise is limited. As a result, pupils do not have the opportunities or resources to promote effective learning.

Quality of the curriculum in RE

The quality of the curriculum in RE is inadequate.

- RE has a very low profile in the curriculum and pupils rarely study RE. The learning opportunities provided are uncoordinated and insufficient for securing any measure of continuity or progression.
- No overarching scheme of work or model is in place nor any coherent planning for the subject's contribution to the wider curriculum.
- When RE is taught it makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development, but too many opportunities are missed in the curriculum for this contribution to be consistent.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in RE

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

- RE is not taught frequently enough to ensure pupils' receive their full entitlement in the subject. No designated teacher has responsibility for the subject. As a result, there is no one to take the lead in developing the subject, ensuring the curriculum secures pupils' entitlement and in training staff.
- School leadership is not well informed about subject content or how RE might be taught within the existing curriculum structure.

- Evaluations of RE and of pupils' learning are rigorous and honest and recognise the shortfalls in subject provision. Development planning for RE reflects accurately the priorities that need to be implemented to reverse the current state of affairs.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising achievement in RE by ensuring that:
 - pupils receive their full entitlement to RE
 - the subject is effectively incorporated into the curriculum so that pupils have a continuous experience of the subject and that they make progress throughout the school
 - ensuring that subject leadership has a good understanding of RE that can be shared with all teachers in the school through staff training 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. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Wintersgill
Additional Inspector