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Mr V Lovell
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Dear Mr Lovell

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 9 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 good.

Achievement in RE

Achievement in RE is good.

- Standards in RE at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement is good.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop very good knowledge of Christianity and Hinduism. They confidently recall stories from these religions and describe accurately key features of religions using the correct terminology. They understand how aspects of Christianity are related and are developing a coherent knowledge of the religion. They have a basic understanding of denominational differences and understand that these can lead to disagreements. They realise that the local church fulfils several central roles in a community and are beginning to ask questions about religious beliefs, such as in relation to death.

- By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have developed an impressive knowledge of a wide range of features of the religions they have studied. In particular, they have a very broad knowledge of Christianity and considerable depth in their knowledge of the religion in Cornwall. They are able to distinguish clearly between religions.
- Pupils use and develop a wide range of skills in RE. They analyse and interpret information well, which contributes to the clarity of their understanding. They work well individually and in groups.
- When given the opportunity pupils can talk about and explore deeper aspects of the subject offering thoughtful responses and ideas. In a Year 1/2 lesson pupils reflected on death and loss after a visit to the village graveyard.
- Pupils' learning in RE is good and the subject supports their literacy and oracy very well.
- Pupils enjoy RE and their behaviour is excellent. They find Christianity interesting because so much of it reflects on the local area and are fascinated and keen to learn about other religions.

Quality of teaching in RE

The quality of teaching in RE is good.

- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable.
- Lesson planning is good and the level of challenge is high across the school. Lessons are planned carefully for mixed-age classes so that the higher ability are challenged while lower ability pupils are given simpler tasks and receive good support from teaching assistants. Teachers are skilled in engaging pupils and they make learning interesting.
- Pupils benefit from a good range of resources, including laptops. These enable pupils to develop skills of enquiry and reflection, for example by comparing different sources and following virtual tours of places that they are unable to access in person.
- Formal assessment is not well developed but in this very small school teachers know their pupils well and can give accurate estimates of their progress. Pupils complete a lot of valuable written work in RE and this provides evidence for their progress.

Quality of the curriculum in RE

The quality of the curriculum in RE is good.

- The scheme of work is being developed to implement the new Cornwall agreed syllabus. The school runs a rolling programme for the mixed-age classes. It is systematically planned to minimise confusion between religions.
- Progression and continuity are strengths of the curriculum. These can be seen particularly in the long-term plans for teaching Christianity, where

specific themes such as Jesus, the Bible, denominational differences and ethics are revisited with increasing levels of difficulty. The extended challenge for each class is often achieved by focusing units on key questions, which become increasingly complex as pupils move through the school.

- Religions other than Christianity are taught in termly blocks of time, which enable pupils to gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of each, with minimal confusion.
- Opportunities for pupils to make progress in relation to the aspect attainment related to 'learning from religion' are less obviously planned than those in relation to 'learning about religion'.
- RE makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall, but particularly to their social and cultural development through local Cornish studies and their learning about other faiths.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in RE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is good.

- The subject leader is well informed about current developments in RE at local and national level, making good use of relevant websites. Priorities for subject development are well thought out.
- There is a commitment to high standards in RE throughout the school and the subject leader has made accurate evaluations of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school makes very good use of training opportunities provided by the local authority, which has contributed to teachers' good subject knowledge. New knowledge, developed through training, is shared with colleagues.
- RE has an important place in the school, not least because of its contribution to pupils' understanding of Cornish history and culture.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- making more formal provision for pupils to 'learn from' religion.

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

Barbara Wintersgill
Additional Inspector