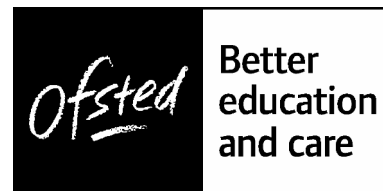


Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6644
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs K Morgan
Headteacher
Quernmore VC CE Primary School
Postern Gate Road
Quernmore
Lancaster
Lancashire
LA2 9EL

Dear Mrs Morgan

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 26 September 2006 to look at work in religious education (RE).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the implementation of the locally agreed syllabus.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with members of staff and pupils in Years 5 and 6, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observations of lessons in Years 1/2 and 5/6.

The overall effectiveness of RE was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is satisfactory overall.

- Pupils reach standards that are in line with those expected for their age. Across the school a number are working at above this level on aspects of “learning from religion”. Examples of this are Year 6 pupils’ thoughtful reflections on Jesus’ feelings in the Garden of Gethsemane and descriptions of peace by pupils in Year 3. They think it is “as delicate as a pink rose” and “as soft as a grey goose feather”. This level of understanding by higher attaining pupils is not demonstrated consistently across all elements of the subject.
- Pupils’ speaking and listening skills are above average and this helps them make well structured and considered responses to the ideas they encounter in RE. They are able to articulate their thoughts clearly, using complex language structures and a broad range of vocabulary. They listen well to their teachers and one another, building ideas on the points made previously.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and have positive attitudes to RE. They are keen to participate in class.

Quality of teaching and learning in RE

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Good features of lessons included detailed planning for the development of skills; appropriate resources well matched to the lesson objectives; careful questioning that developed pupils’ understanding and evaluated their progress effectively; and, time for thinking so that pupils could formulate both their oral and written responses.
- Teaching assistants offer good support to pupils in lessons.
- Where teaching was less effective, lesson objectives were not specific enough and the pace of learning was too slow.
- Whilst praise is used well in marking, there is insufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- In line with the school’s overall curriculum approach, planning focuses effectively on the progressive development of pupils’ skills and attitudes. This enables RE to make a strong contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- The curriculum is tailored well to pupils' needs and enriched by a good range of visits to places of worship and visitors from a number of faith groups. There is a good range of resources.
- Connections between units of work need to be more explicit so that pupils understand more clearly the links between previous work and new learning.

Leadership and management of RE

Leadership and management of RE are good.

- The curriculum leader has a good knowledge of the subject and is able to support staff effectively in the planning and delivery of learning.
- Pupils' attainment and progress are tracked rigorously. The school has well thought out plans to develop comparisons between performance in RE and standards, achievement and targets in the core subjects.
- Systems for monitoring the quality of provision in RE are manageable and effective. The collaborative approach to reviewing pupils' work ensures a joint understanding amongst staff of the subject's strengths and areas for development.
- Annual development plans are based on a realistic audit of the provision for the subject.

Subject issue

The school has well considered plans for the staged review of the scheme of work in the light of the new agreed syllabus.

Inclusion

There is scope to raise the level of challenge in RE particularly for higher attaining pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to increase the level of challenge in RE so that higher attaining pupils have the opportunity to reach the standards of which they are capable
- to ensure that marking helps pupils to improve their work
- to explain the connections between previous learning and new topics so that pupils have a more coherent understanding of the subject.

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

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority/SACRE and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jane Austin
Her Majesty's Inspector