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Ms C Parkinson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Parkinson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education (RE)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 17 October 2006 to look at work in 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 impact of the new Norfolk LA Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

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 staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of one Key Stage 2 lesson.

The overall effectiveness of Religious Education was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

The achievement of pupils in RE is good overall.

- Pupils make good progress in RE across the school and the standards they attain by the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly in line with expectations indicated in the Agreed Syllabus.
- Religious education contributes effectively to pupils' personal development. They enjoy and benefit from their learning, particularly in terms of their confidence in dealing with moral and spiritual issues

and the development of positive attitudes towards religious and cultural diversity in an almost exclusively mono-cultural area.

### Quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is good.

- Pupils learn well in RE and make good progress as a result of well-planned lessons and teachers' positive approach to the subject. Pupils gain confidence quickly because they are encouraged to express themselves in an open and supportive atmosphere, and are drawn into lessons by the teachers' readiness to involve all learners in thinking about and reflecting on their work.
- Pupils' progress is monitored effectively and informally in class and teachers have a broad awareness of their progress, reflecting the school's commitment to developing the overall quality of assessment for learning.
- The school is aware of the need to work towards a more rigorous approach to determining the levels at which pupils are working and to setting challenging targets.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The RE curriculum currently provides a suitable balance between pupils learning about different religious traditions and their engagement with questions which challenge their thinking and help them to confront important issues. Whole school enrichment activities further support this process.
- The school meets the statutory requirements for the subject.

### Leadership and management

Leadership and management of RE are good.

- Development of RE in the school is given clear direction and support from both senior management and the subject co-ordinator, and there is an overall commitment to raising standards and supporting pupils' learning.
- Regular and generally accurate self-evaluation ensures that forward planning identifies key priorities and strategies for development.
- Long and medium term planning are good. Plans are disseminated effectively among the staff so that there is a clear overall understanding of what is expected in the subject, backed up by support, resources and training from the co-ordinator.

## Subject issue

The school has anticipated the introduction of the revised Norfolk Agreed Syllabus and is well ahead in planning to integrate its requirements into the RE programme. The subject co-ordinator has undertaken training and has drawn up clear strategies for development. The school as a whole is well informed about the implications of proposed changes.

## Inclusion

The school gives priority to ensuring that pupils of all abilities make good progress and this is reflected in the quality of teaching and support they receive in RE.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to develop staff expertise in the use of creative thinking and questioning in RE
- to extend the use made of level descriptions from the Agreed Syllabus, for assessing progress and target setting
- to sharpen the focus of planning in RE by interlinking the two attainment targets within teaching and utilising the question-based approach suggested in the guidance material supporting the Agreed Syllabus.

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 and SACRE and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Rudge  
Additional Inspector