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Mrs P M Sutcliffe  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Sutcliffe

### Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 16 November 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 staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons and a discussion with the link governor for RE.

The overall effectiveness of RE was judged to be good.

### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in RE are good.

- By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards attained are average. Given pupils' low attainment on entry to the school this represents good progress. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 express their own ideas well. They apply and evaluate what they have learnt about religion exceptionally well. These skills are aptly summed up by a Year 5 pupil who, having listened to a visitor from the Buddhist faith, said, 'I respect her point of view and understand what she believes, but Buddhism is not for me'.

- Overwhelmingly, pupils have positive attitudes towards RE. They enjoy their lessons, particularly the opportunities to participate in drama and play games. Behaviour in lessons is good. They say, 'we like RE because it teaches us to respect other peoples' religions'. They respond well to opportunities for reflection. Pupils enjoy making discoveries about what people believe through, for example, the exploration of religious artefacts. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

### Quality of teaching and learning of subject

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is good.

- Typically teaching is good. Teachers use questions effectively to extend pupils' thinking. The pace of teaching and learning is cracking. Transition from one activity to the next is managed skilfully and because pupils are clear about what they are expected to do no time is wasted. Activities are interesting and well matched to pupils needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) are supported well by teaching assistants and make good progress. A range of active strategies encourage pupils to work both independently and cooperatively. In a good Year 5 / 6 lesson pupils were paired to explore the meaning of peace. Thoughts that they expressed were profound. A sensory approach, using colourful religious artefacts, enables younger pupils to make useful discoveries about what Christians believe. However, insufficient use is made of computers to develop pupils' research skills.
- Pupils' work is marked with encouraging comments. However, these comments do not make it sufficiently clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is planned well to fit a model of mixed age classes in this small school. It makes a valuable contribution to raising pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. It is enriched by visitors from a range of faith traditions. Pupils say, 'RE is interesting and makes us think about God and other religions'. It successfully promotes excellence and enjoyment in learning. Literacy skills are developed well through RE. Flexible, innovative and creative, it is supplemented well by 'Circle Time' which is skilfully planned to promote pupils' spiritual development. Insufficient opportunities for the development of information and communication technology skills prevents the RE curriculum being outstanding.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management in RE are good.

- The subject co-ordinator ensures that RE is a high profile subject. Self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses is good. This analysis is used well to improve the subject. Monitoring of teaching and learning is good and contributes to improving the quality of provision. The priorities on the subject action plan focus on raising achievement and improving the quality of provision. There is a clear strategic plan for the implementation of the new agreed syllabus.
- Although there are a number of good processes to check how well pupils are doing they are not brought together into a cohesive system to demonstrate their progress over time. The subject leader hopes that the implementation of the new agreed syllabus will support improved assessment of the subject. The link governor for RE is a valuable critical friend and provides valuable support to the RE co-ordinator.

## Implementation of the Agreed Syllabus

- The school has yet to begin the process of implementing the new agreed syllabus. There is a clear, time lined, strategic plan for this and training for all teachers is planned. It is clear when new modules will be taught. There is a specific priority on the development of assessment. The RE co-ordinator is very effectively supported by the RE adviser in Hull.

## Inclusion

- Inclusion is a significant strength in the teaching of RE. The use of social stories and a picture exchange communication system enables pupils with autism to cooperate with their peers and communicate independent choices. Those with complex speech and language difficulties are effectively supported and gain in confidence in speaking in front of their peers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to ensure that pupils make use of computers to improve their research skills and find out more detailed information about the religions they study
- to ensure pupils' work is marked using comments that give them clear pointers as to what they need to do to improve
- to review the processes used to show the progress pupils make over time and bring these together into a manageable tracking system; and, use this tracking system as appropriate to trigger intervention to raise achievement in RE for individual pupils as necessary.

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

Jeffery Plumb  
Additional Inspector