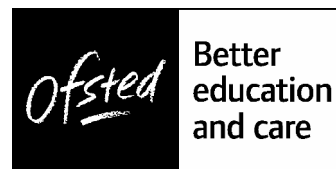


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Mrs L Cook  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Cook

### Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 20 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.

The overall effectiveness of RE was judged to be inadequate.

### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in RE are inadequate.

- From a very low starting point pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 1. By Year 2, they reach standards close to average. These pupils have a good knowledge of, for example, the Rama/Sita story and aspects of Judaism. Good progress is sustained throughout Years 3 and 4, but then pupils take a rapid dip. By Year 6 standards are below average. This demonstrates underperformance. By Year 6, pupils' knowledge is

reasonable but their understanding and expression of what they have learnt in RE is weak.

- Pupils' behaviour in RE is good. Key Stage 1 pupils enjoy the subject. Upper Key Stage 2 pupils say, 'our RE lessons are fun but we do not get them regularly'. Overall, pupils have a positive attitude to learning about religions. Promotion of pupils' spiritual development is better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2.

### Quality of teaching and learning of subject

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Teaching is satisfactory overall. Throughout Key Stage 1 teaching and learning is good. An outstanding lesson was observed in Year 2. Although some lessons are satisfactory, teaching throughout Key Stage 2 is inadequate.
- Teaching of RE in blocks is good practice. However, it needs to be monitored carefully to ensure that it happens regularly as planned. Older Key Stage 2 pupils are muddled and confused about the different religions they have studied, due in part to gaps they have experienced in their programme.
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Too often pupils are not clear about what they need to do to improve their work. The work of older pupils also shows evidence of insufficient challenge in the teaching. There is too little work in the books of the higher attainers.
- Teachers' confidence in teaching the subject is variable; some are uncertain in their use of affective techniques such as taking pupils on an imaginary journey to raise their spiritual awareness and express their feelings.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The school has only recently begun to modify its RE curriculum to meet the requirements of the new agreed syllabus. The subject leader says that she anticipates a seamless transition, but has already encountered difficulties in fitting the new assessment criteria to the curriculum content.
- Curriculum planning demonstrates a good balance of the two attainment targets and meets statutory requirements. However, insufficient opportunities are planned to develop pupils' information and communication technology skills. Insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of RE in upper Key Stage 2.
- New curriculum modules have only very recently been implemented and so the inspection felt too early to evaluate their impact.

## Leadership and management

The leadership and management in RE are inadequate.

- Over the past year you have focussed on raising achievement in English, mathematics and science. In addition you have focussed on positioning the school to become a Children's Centre. As a consequence RE has not been a main priority for development. There has been no detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in RE and no specific action has been taken to raise achievement. The quality of teaching and learning in RE has not been monitored and the good practice in the school has not been shared.

## Implementation of the Agreed Syllabus

- The school has made a slow start to the implementation of the new agreed syllabus. Very recently a few curriculum modules have been modified at Key Stage 2. Assessment has not yet been developed to fit the curriculum content. However, there is a good time-lined action plan for the implementation of the new syllabus. The inspection occurred at a very early stage in its implementation and so its effectiveness could not be evaluated.

## Inclusion

- Inclusion is satisfactory in RE, but there is limited opportunity to stretch the more able pupils. Teaching assistants support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities effectively. They ensure that these pupils are included in learning activities.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to raise achievement and standards at Key Stage 2
- to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the upper part of Key Stage 2
- to undertake a thorough analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and to use this to inform planning to raise standards and improve the quality of provision in RE
- to link assessment to the content of the new syllabus
- to ensure effective leadership and management of the subject.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop religious education 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