

21 November 2006

Mr P Hodson
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Dear Mr Hodson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 15 November 2006 to look at work in religious education (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. 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 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of RE was judged to be good with some outstanding features.

Achievement and Standards

Achievement and standards are good with outstanding features.

- Standards are high in relation to 'learning about religion' and outstanding in relation to 'learning from religion'.
- Pupils make at least good progress. This is a result of their enthusiasm for the subject that results from stimulating teaching under strong leadership.
- Pupils like RE and this is confirmed by the school's monitoring.

- The subject makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development. RE is used a vehicle to promote positive values, particularly those that contribute to self-esteem, inter-personal relationships and community identity and cohesion.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is good with some outstanding features.

- Pupils' make good progress and attitudes are a direct result of the quality of teaching.
- Teachers are not afraid to take risks and use innovative teaching styles to promote the underlying aims and values of the subject.
- There is very good support for all pupils and exceptionally good involvement of parents in their children's learning.
- An outstanding feature is the inventive use of art and ICT in the presentation of work.
- The quality of assessment is good with the potential to be outstanding. The new planning and assessment leaflets inform parents well and seek their views. They clarifying learning objectives, support self-assessment and provide feedback on the quality of work.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The subject leader has set a good example, followed by other staff, of using a range of engaging teaching and learning activities to make the curriculum appropriate for the interests and aspirations of pupils.
- The long term planning is designed in a way that allows pupils to build soundly on what they have already done.
- There is good provision for the basic skills of literacy and ICT.
- Curriculum planning includes unusually detailed links with the 'every child matters' learning outcomes.

Leadership and Management

Leadership and management of the subject are good with outstanding features.

- There is a clearly articulated purpose and ethos for the subject that focuses on its contribution to raising standards as well as promoting personal development and encouraging community links.
- The subject leader monitors planning and the resulting quality of pupils' work. She has instigated some excellent practice such as maintaining a file of evidence of marked work.
- Links with parents are outstanding and the school uses simple but unusually rigorous procedures to elicit their views on the subject.

Implementation of the Agreed Syllabus

- The process of implementing the agreed syllabus has been very effective. The subject leader has a clear understanding of the main changes in the agreed syllabus after attending the local authority's dissemination programme. The process of implementation has been incorporated within an improvement plan. A careful self-evaluation is being undertaken of the strengths and weaknesses of the current provision to identify how the new syllabus can support improvement.

Inclusion

- Inclusion is good and no group of pupils underachieves, although there is potential to raise the achievement of the most able.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to build up exemplars of assessed work for each level and across year groups
- to develop the use of the planning and assessment sheets so that all pupils can be more appropriately challenged.

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

Barbara Wintersgill
Additional Inspector