

22 November 2006

Mrs Jan Kirman
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Kirman

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 16 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 satisfactory.

Achievement and Standards

Achievement and standards in RE are satisfactory

- At Key Stage 1 standards are high and pupils make good progress. Tasks have been carefully designed to enable pupils to achieve well.
- At Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress, attaining standards in RE which are broadly average. They make better progress 'learning from' religion than they do in 'learning about' religion.
- RE makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is satisfactory.

- Good features of teaching include the creative use of the whiteboard, periodic plenaries to reinforce learning and stepped activities to help children develop their understanding of difficult concepts. Good differentiated activities have been embedded in the planning.
- These qualities are not consistent, especially across Key Stage 2 where, with the exception of pupils in the Year 5/6 class, very little work has been produced, particularly in 'learning about' religion.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Long term planning ensures comprehensive coverage of the units in the agreed syllabus and the coverage of all strands in the attainment targets. However the plans are not always implemented effectively to ensure good progress at Key Stage 2.
- Medium term planning provides a thorough basis for teachers' lesson planning and has many excellent features, notably the differentiated tasks. Another strong feature is the annotation of planning to indicate the quality of what has been achieved. Simple but effective assessment systems are in place.

Leadership and Management

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

- The subject is managed by an experienced subject leader.
- All key documents are in place, including the beginnings of a self-evaluation.
- The outstanding features relate to the monitoring of RE, which is exceptional. Teachers receive detailed and constructive feedback, which should enable them to improve their practice. However, the detailed monitoring and reporting by the subject leader has not led to sufficient improvements in provision and achievement at Key Stage 2.

Implementation of the agreed syllabus

- The implementation of the agreed syllabus is good with outstanding features. The subject leader has a clear, thorough understanding of the rationale and key features of the agreed syllabus based on attendance at the training day and personal scrutiny of the syllabus. A careful self-evaluation is being undertaken of the strengths and weaknesses of the current provision and an identification of how the new syllabus can support improvement. There is a clear, coherent and well-managed strategy in place to implement the syllabus in a comprehensive way.

Inclusion

- There is a significant difference between the progress made by pupils across the two key stages. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their personal development.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to investigate why the often outstanding monitoring work of the subject leader has had limited impact at Key Stage 2 and take steps to remedy the situation
- to address weaknesses in pupils' work and progress at Key Stage 2
- to ensure that pupils maintain high quality, well-presented records of work
- to make assessment integral to planning and teaching across 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

Barbara Wintersgill
Additional Inspector