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Mrs A Newman
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Newman

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 11 December 2007 to look at work in religious education (RE).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of RE, the visit had a particular focus on the subject's contribution to the promotion of community cohesion.

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 is judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement in RE is satisfactory.

- Almost all pupils attain standards that are broadly average. Most pupils make acceptable progress and gain knowledge, understanding and skills at a satisfactory rate across all key stages, although not evenly across all year groups.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity is better than that of other religions and, in lessons seen, was very good. Their less well developed understanding of other religions means their ability to make comparisons between different traditions is limited.

- Pupils enjoy RE, as seen in their positive attitudes and good behaviour. Their personal development in RE is good overall.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is satisfactory overall.

- In both lessons seen pupils made good progress and the teaching had a number of good features. Across the school most pupils make at least the progress that should be expected of them and they enjoy their work and are motivated to do well. The teachers observed had a good knowledge of the subject and the level of challenge was good in both lessons.
- The teaching methods used are appropriate to the lesson objectives. ICT is used well to develop pupils' learning. There is good attention to the needs of different ability groups. A particularly positive feature of the teaching is the challenge to pupils to understand that behind contemporary popular manifestations of Christianity there are specific religious beliefs and traditions.
- However, the progress they make is uneven across the school. Pupils' learning is expressed to a far higher standard orally than in writing and because there are no mechanisms for recording oral contributions, evidence of their learning is restricted to what they write.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- The provision for RE meets all statutory requirements and is based on the Surrey agreed syllabus and schemes of work. Considerably more attention is given to Christianity than to other religions, and this is reflected in pupils' learning.
- The subject is adequately matched to the needs and interests of pupils, and to the Christian ethos of the school. It is organised systematically in a way that allows pupils to build soundly on what they have already done, particularly in relation to Christianity. The school has close and positive links with the local church but has not yet developed contacts with other faith communities.
- The curriculum is relevant to the school's Christian foundation but units on other religions are too unevenly spread to promote progress in pupils' understanding of them.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of RE are good.

- The leadership of the subject is strongly focused on raising standards and promoting the personal development of pupils. The strengths and weaknesses of subject provision have been accurately identified and the strategies for taking the subject forward are appropriate and have already begun to have a positive impact.

- Very good quality assurance procedures are in place and will shortly be fully implemented. Good links exist with parents and the local church to support the work of the subject.

The contribution of RE to promotion of community cohesion

The contribution of RE to promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. In this increasingly multi-faith school, teachers are justly proud of the fact that no children are withdrawn from RE or collective worship. Pupils develop a sound understanding and awareness of diversity in religion. They have some opportunity to consider the significance of religion in their own lives and the lives of others, although this is more specifically related to Christianity. Some curriculum choices were made because of their potential to contribute to community cohesion; for example the Year 6 unit, *'How can we live our lives as global citizens?'* Other units planned but not yet taught include investigations of the Buddhist and Sikh ways of life. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to engage with the diversity of religion in the local community

Inclusion

Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress because the work teachers set, especially oral work, promotes high achievement. However, progress is not even across the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- establishing more effective mechanisms for recording pupils' progress
- reviewing the pattern of work on non-Christian religions
- forging relationships with non-Christian religions in the local community.

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 the local diocese. It 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