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24 January 2008

Mr M Klekot
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Klekot

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education (RE)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 21 January 2008 to look at work in 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 way the subject contributes 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 a lesson which was timetabled on the day of the visit.

The overall effectiveness of RE was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement in RE is satisfactory.

- Standards across the school are below those outlined in the Walsall agreed syllabus. The attainment of the pupils on entry is well below average but they make generally satisfactory progress in RE by the time they leave in Year 6. More able pupils can talk about how learning about religions has, and can, influence their own lives. However, pupils lack a coherent knowledge of the religions studied.

- The contribution of RE to pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils appreciate the importance of showing respect for religious and cultural diversity.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and they have positive attitudes to RE.

Quality of teaching and learning

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

- Lessons are structured so that pupils have a fair understanding of their purpose and the expected outcomes in learning. The use of talk in lessons sustains pupils' interest. The use of a reasonable range of resources, including information and communication technology and artefacts, enlivens the learning.
- Assessment is underdeveloped. Teachers are aware of the agreed syllabus level descriptors, but the use of these to inform planning and to track pupils' progress in learning, is under-developed. However, this is identified as a priority for improvement.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- The school is using commercially produced schemes of work which are generally matched to the agreed syllabus. In the best examples of planning, teachers adapt the scheme to suit pupils' needs. Teachers weekly planning is generally suitable in providing a satisfactory curriculum. However, the provision does not as yet have the necessary continuity and progression so that pupils' prior learning and achievements are built on, and extended, across the key stages.
- The Walsall agreed syllabus is currently being reviewed. The headteacher recognises that the school's schemes of work will need to be thoroughly reviewed in the light of further guidance from the local authority.

Leadership and management of RE

Leadership and management in RE are satisfactory.

- The RE co-ordinator is keen and readily helps other staff to have access to teaching resources. Teachers and staff who teach RE show commitment to the subject and make good attempts to develop their subject knowledge.
- Monitoring arrangements are informal but there is a reasonable view of the provision for the subject. Commitment to secure further improvement is good, including that from senior leaders.

The promotion of community cohesion

RE makes a helpful contribution to the promotion of community cohesion. The teaching encourages respect for diversity and is successful in enabling pupils

to do achieve this aim. Trips to places of worship help to enrich pupils' experiences and understanding of their local community.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is satisfactory. All pupils are encouraged to participate in lessons and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing assessment procedures so that they help to inform teachers' planning and further improve pupils' progress and raise their standards
- ensuring that revised schemes of work achieve good continuity and progression in pupils' learning.

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 and SACRE and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector