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Ms M Driver
Headteacher
William Ransom Primary School
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Dear Ms Driver

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education (RE)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 03 March 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 good with outstanding features.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement in RE is good with outstanding features.

- Standards across the school are at least in line with those outlined in the Hertfordshire agreed syllabus. Standards attained by the more able pupils are above average. By the end of Year 6, pupils' progress is very good. Pupils have a coherent knowledge about the religions studied. More able pupils can talk about how learning about religions has, and can, influence their own lives.
- The contribution of RE to pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils appreciate the importance of showing respect for religious and

cultural diversity and their responses are sensitive, taking very good account of the feelings of others.

- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and they have very positive attitudes to RE.

Quality of teaching and learning

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

- Lessons are structured so that pupils have a very good understanding of the purpose of lessons and expected outcomes in learning. The use of a wide range of resources, including information and communication technology and artefacts, enlivens the learning. Teachers' routine practice of evaluating learning, so that it informs lesson planning, is good. Teachers work hard to keep their subject knowledge updated.
- Assessment is good. Teachers use the agreed syllabus level descriptors to support their planning and reporting to parents. The use of assessment to inform pupils about their progress, and as a tool for involving them more in their learning, is less well developed.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in RE is good.

- The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Long and medium term plans clearly identify both attainment targets and good attention is paid to the systematic development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of religions.
- Pupils are encouraged to express their responses, their thoughts and feelings through art, drama and discussions which they value highly. The school is expecting to review curricular planning in the light of further supplementary guidance from the local SACRE.

Leadership and management of RE

Leadership and management are good with outstanding features.

- The two RE co-ordinators' shared responsibility is used to good effect. Their commitment and enthusiasm ensures that staff are supported very well in teaching and planning.
- Monitoring helps to identify strengths and areas for further improvement. This has resulted in a better balance of activities and tasks to ensure a good balance between 'learning about' and 'learning from' religion.

The promotion of community cohesion

RE makes a very strong contribution to the promotion of community cohesion. The teaching encourages respect for diversity and is very successful in enabling pupils to achieve this aim. Trips to places of worship and visiting speakers help to enrich pupils' experiences and understanding of the religious traditions represented in their local community.

Inclusion

The arrangements for ensuring the inclusion of all pupils in RE are very good. Effective use is made of teaching assistants and other adults to help in lessons. In the best lessons and planning, inclusion is supported well through higher levels of challenge for more able pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing the curriculum further to ensure assessment tasks enable pupils to play a greater part in learning and in assessing their progress in RE.

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