

08 December 2008

Mrs A Wright  
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Dear Mrs Wright

### Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 28 November 2008 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 creative thinking.

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, a scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of RE was judged to be satisfactory.

### Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement in RE is satisfactory.

- Standards in end of Key Stage 2 are below those expected in the Leicestershire agreed syllabus. Pupils in Year 6 are able to identify the meaning of different aspects of religion. For example, they were able to give the main themes in the story of the lost son such as jealousy. However, they found it difficult to relate their learning to wider aspects of human experience. Pupils are less adept in using what they have learned in RE to express their own views about religious and moral issues and compare these with those of others.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are able to recognise some religious stories, symbols and words, with some beginning to discuss their meaning. For example, pupils were able to consider in simple terms how light is sometimes used to depict Jesus.

- Pupils in Reception show an appreciation of people's different cultures and beliefs through their study of festivals and celebrations. For example, pupils were able to talk in very simple terms about the nativity story and how this relates to the celebration of Christmas.
- The contribution of RE to supporting pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils show positive attitudes to the subject. They know about their local community and have some sense of the wider world, appreciating that there are people who have different faiths or religions but their understanding of what it is like to live in a multicultural society is more limited.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is satisfactory.

- Relationships between adults and pupils are good so there is a good working atmosphere in RE lessons. Learning is carefully planned and includes a suitable range of different experiences and activities, such as pair and group work, art and drama which maintain pupils' interest well, and which they find 'fun'. However, much of the work is aimed at the whole class and so more able pupils, in particular, are not always given the challenge they need to improve their work further.
- Assessment opportunities are developing. The school has created a useful tool to assess pupils' attainment, based closely on the agreed syllabus success criteria and expectations. However, it is not yet used to provide an overall judgement on pupils' progress in RE neither is it used to enable teachers to adjust their teaching to meet pupils' needs more precisely.

## Quality of curriculum

The curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- The schemes of work for RE take appropriate account of the current Leicestershire agreed syllabus. There are detailed long and medium term plans in place. While careful attention is paid to matching the curriculum to the needs and interests of the pupils, insufficient attention is paid in the planning to the progressive development of the skills of the subject. There is scope to develop more opportunities for independent writing into RE.
- The subject has some effective links with the personal, social and health education programme in the school. Occasionally, however, the planning does not ensure that a focus on RE objectives is secured. There is a satisfactory range of activities to enrich the curriculum.

## Leadership and management

The leadership and management of RE are satisfactory.

- The subject co-ordinator has a strong appreciation of the importance of RE to the pupils' personal development and the potential of the subject to make a significant impact on their lives.

- The school has recognised the need to extend the arrangements for assessment in the subject in line with the levels of attainment identified in the locally agreed syllabus.
- While the current arrangements for monitoring the subject are satisfactory, there is scope to ensure a clearer focus on pupils' progress and the consistency of assessment across the school.

### Creative Thinking

Lessons and other activities are delivered in a wide range of ways using information and communication technology, art, drama and discussion. At present, however, the opportunities for pupils to use higher order skills of thinking are not developed consistently across all aspects of the learning in RE.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing the level of challenge in RE lessons by providing opportunities for pupils to write in more depth and by ensuring that the needs of all learners are met through differentiated work
- ensuring that assessment tasks are focused more explicitly on what teachers want the pupils to understand
- planning the curriculum to ensure all learning experiences are taught as part of a balanced programme which secures greater development of the key skills required in RE and builds progression and challenge 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 Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth  
Her Majesty's Inspector