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Mrs C Clare
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Clare

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co operation, and that of your staff and children, during my visit on 23 February 2009 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 creative thinking in 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 yourself and the subject co-ordinator, discussions with pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, and observations of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of RE was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement in RE is satisfactory.

- In the Early Years and Foundation Stage, children show an interest in aspects of celebrations, such as harvest and Christmas, and their importance for religious people. Children have a growing understanding of the idea of belonging to their families and the school and are able to talk about special people, places and books. Pupils in Year 2 are able to retell and suggest meanings for religious stories.

- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils reach standards broadly in line with the Lincolnshire agreed syllabus expectations and pupils' progress is satisfactory. They are aware that religious beliefs are diverse and use religious vocabulary appropriately to describe practices. They can describe the impact of beliefs on people's lifestyles, particularly in relation to the lives of saints they have studied. However, pupils' ability to describe similarities and differences between religions is underdeveloped, as is their ability to relate religious material to their own experiences.
- The personal development of pupils in the context of RE is good. Pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject and appreciate the importance of valuing religious and cultural diversity.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is good.

- Lessons are well planned and teachers make the purpose of the learning clear to pupils.
- Teachers use good stimulus activities to engage pupils' interest and resources are generally matched well to pupils' differing needs. This was particularly evident in lessons observed on the Passover and pilgrimage to Lourdes.
- Teachers use questioning and explanations effectively reflecting their good subject knowledge and organising learning using a good range of strategies, such as talk and independent research.
- Teachers are encouraged to evaluate lessons and pupils' learning so that the next steps in developing knowledge and understanding can be identified and tracked.
- While there are examples of pupils progressing well in aspects of their learning, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to investigate comparisons between different religions. There is also scope to extend the opportunities for pupils to explore their own ideas about key religious beliefs.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- The RE curriculum meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The schemes of work are detailed, making use of the agreed syllabus units of work. Lesson plans helpfully identify key questions to be explored in teaching and learning.
- The school is developing cross-curricular links to extend the discrete RE elements.
- The use of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' experiences is limited. This is particularly with regard to religions other than Christianity.
- There is a simple assessment structure in place that uses the agreed syllabus level descriptors and this is generally effective in identifying whether all pupils are making expected progress. However, its use as a

diagnostic tool to inform planning and tracking individual pupils' progress is underdeveloped.

Leadership and management of RE

The leadership and management of RE are satisfactory with good features.

- The subject coordinator is hardworking and enthusiastic. Monitoring to date indicates that strengths and weaknesses are accurately identified and followed up to bring about improvement.
- Teachers are supported well so that they feel confident with teaching the subject.
- Resources are well organised and supplemented with the use of information and communication technology (ICT).
- There is scope to analyse patterns of achievement more rigorously through pupil interviews and assessment tasks.

Creative thinking in RE

The effectiveness of the use of creative thinking in RE is variable but satisfactory overall. There are strengths with some good use of creative activities to stimulate interest and enjoyment. Story-telling, use of art and role play and imaginative use of ICT are among the examples seen. Where creativity is rather more limited, it is in relation to developing pupils' critical faculties and their ability to use higher level thinking skills in the context of the subject.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing the use of assessment to inform teachers' planning and the tracking of individual pupils' progress
- extending opportunities for visits and visitors from a broader range of religious traditions.

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

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector