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Dear Miss Badawi

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: religious education (RE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 25 January 2010 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 how well pupils are becoming effective learners 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements 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 good.

Achievement in RE

Achievement in RE is good.

- The attainment of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with expectations in the agreed syllabus. However, by the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils reach above-average standards and achievement is good. Pupils are able to make connections between belief and practice. They are able to explore the meaning of religion and the importance this plays in the lives of followers, as well as making links with their own experiences. In particular, pupils talk with real confidence and sensitivity about complex

issues, such as the biased perceptions that society may hold about followers of particular faiths.

- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils were keen to explain that the study of religion can break down barriers between different religious followers and engender harmony and respect.

Quality of teaching of RE

The quality of teaching is good.

- The teaching of RE has a number of good features. Effective questioning enables teachers to assess prior learning and to develop further pupils' knowledge and understanding of RE. Pupils are given good opportunities to work in groups or independently to explore the meaning of new concepts and make connections to their own experiences. They work well together, listening to each other's views and considering carefully opposing positions. As one child stated: 'It is good to hear a different point of view because that makes us think'.
- The very detailed medium-term plans identify assessment opportunities for each unit of work. As a result, teachers are aware of expectations for each lesson. Day-to-day planning is inconsistent within RE. The use of prior assessment to set tasks that are matched well to pupils' needs is not always evident. Although pupils are aware of the progress they are making through discussions with their teacher, marking does not always provide them with the next steps to learning. Learning objectives are assessed at the end of each unit providing the school with valuable information about pupils' attainment. The school is now in the process of identifying how this could be used to monitor pupils' progress.

Quality of the curriculum in RE

The curriculum in RE is good.

- The curriculum has been planned carefully to take into consideration the expectations set out in Hampshire's agreed syllabus. Schemes of work are very detailed and provide good guidance to teachers.
- The school uses a variety of resources and activities to enrich the curriculum. They regularly use 'resource boxes' containing artefacts provided by Hampshire as well as inviting visitors into the school to talk about their faith. Pupils talked with enthusiasm about their visits to places of worship, such as a mosque and a cathedral.
- Effectiveness of leadership and management in RE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is good.

- The subject leader provides good leadership and is very clear about the subject's strengths and areas for development. She works very hard to

ensure that the curriculum inspires pupils. Staff are supported well in developing their subject knowledge through planned meetings.

- There are clear systems in place to evaluate RE and make any necessary changes for the future. As a result of this, the subject leader is well placed to ensure continuous improvement in this area.

Subject issue: How well pupils are becoming effective learners in RE

The medium-term plans incorporate good opportunities for pupils to work in groups and developing their skills in becoming effective learners in RE. They develop their skills as researchers. Pupils generate their own ideas about a topic, make connections with their own experiences and that of others and reflect on the feedback given to them.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing short-term planning that clearly reflects pupils' prior knowledge and sets tasks that are well matched to pupils' needs
- developing a consistent approach to marking so that pupils have a more in-depth understanding of how to improve their work
- further developing systems for monitoring pupils' progress.

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

Susan Gadd
Her Majesty's Inspector