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Ms C Parkyn  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Parkyn

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 28 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of RE is satisfactory.

Achievement in RE

Achievement in RE is satisfactory.

- The attainment of pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with the expectations of the Wiltshire agreed syllabus, reflecting satisfactory achievement. Pupils are able to make connections between religious beliefs and practices. Older pupils are able to identify some of the similarities and differences between religions. They express their own views and reflect on their feelings in relation to issues related to religion and belief.

- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy RE and behaviour in lessons is good. They are keen to point out that RE is important in helping them to become caring and thoughtful individuals.

#### Quality of teaching of RE

The quality of teaching in RE is satisfactory.

- Although the quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory overall, there are some good features within lessons. Teachers use a variety of strategies and resources, such as discussion, role-play, artefacts and information and communication technology (ICT), to ensure pupils are motivated and interested in their learning.
- Teaching in lessons is generally satisfactory. However, planning does not always take into account pupils' prior learning. As a result, some pupils are given tasks that lack challenge and pupils' progress is satisfactory. In some books, marking provides pupils with appropriate advice on their 'next steps to learning', but this good practice is limited and inconsistent across the school.

#### Quality of the curriculum in RE

The curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- The curriculum has been adjusted to take account of the new Wiltshire agreed syllabus. The relatively new scheme of work provides adequate advice to staff with a clear progression of knowledge. The school is aware that it now needs to consider a systematic approach to developing pupils' learning skills, as noted in the agreed syllabus.
- Good use is made of ICT to support the curriculum and appropriate links with art and drama exist. The school is part of the 'Comenius project' and, as a result, teachers from Turkey recently visited the school and provided valuable support to developing pupils' understanding of Islam. There are good opportunities for pupils to visit a range of churches within the Christian tradition. However, the opportunity to visit places of worship or have a range of speakers from non-Christian traditions is limited.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in RE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is satisfactory.

- The subject leader, who is new to the responsibility, is enthusiastic about making the necessary changes to improve RE. Since September, the response to RE has been monitored through pupil and staff questionnaires. This has provided valuable information about the strengths and areas for development within the subject. There are plans to further develop the monitoring and assessment of RE to track pupils' progress and assess achievement according to the levels specified in the agreed syllabus.

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

Currently, pupils are involved in asking questions, and making links between different religious practices and their own life experiences. This helps them to interpret and reflect on the importance and impact of religion. Planning does not yet systematically develop pupils' thinking skills or provide older pupils with a range of opportunities to be involved in research-based learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- reviewing the planning so that it systematically embeds pupils' learning skills as identified in the agreed syllabus
- introducing opportunities to assess pupils' progress according to the levels of achievement specified in the agreed syllabus
- further developing the role of the subject leader in monitoring and tracking 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