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Mrs D Davis
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Davis

Ofsted 2009-19 subject survey inspection programme: religious education (RE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 19 and 20 January 2010 to look at work in RE.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the RE, 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 and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of RE is satisfactory.

Achievement in RE

The achievement of pupils in RE is satisfactory.

- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory across the school. Between Years 3 to 6, pupils extend their knowledge of different religions. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are broadly in line with the Nottinghamshire agreed syllabus. Pupils can describe the key elements of religions they have studied and the impact religion makes on people's lives.
- Pupils have an increasing understanding of their learning in RE because of the opportunities they have to reflect on 'learning from religion'.

- The contribution of RE to pupils' personal development is good. Pupils' attitudes to RE are positive and they value learning about religious and cultural diversity. Behaviour in lessons is good.

Quality of teaching of RE

The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features.

- Teachers use a wide range of stimulus materials to motivate pupils and this leads to at least satisfactory progress in lessons. A notable strength is the use of strategies to engage all pupils through pair and small group work which promote pupils' oracy and literacy skills well. Information and communication technology (ICT) is also used well as an effective tool to promote learning.
- The purpose of lessons is shared carefully with pupils and tasks are sufficiently matched to the pupils' different needs. Support assistants are used appropriately to help those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Much of the learning is well organised and enjoyable. However, the range of skills pupils are required to use does not always fully extend to investigating religion and belief.
- Assessment to identify how well pupils are learning is developing. The subject leader has identified the need to review the way level descriptors are used to form summary judgements, underpinned by teachers' moderation to ensure the reliability of assessment.

Quality of the curriculum in RE

The quality of the curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- There are reasonably detailed long- and medium-term plans in place, supported by other external guidance documents which teachers find helpful.
- There is flexibility in the way RE is organised, including blocking work to provide more sustained sequences of learning.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in RE

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

- There is a clear commitment to improvement and to ensure that statutory requirements are met. A planned review of existing schemes of work is well judged to take account of the recently published agreed syllabus.
- Monitoring identifies strengths and weaknesses well and action is taken to improve pupils' outcomes and provision.
- The subject leader keeps up to date through professional development opportunities.

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

Pupils develop learning skills in an appropriate and steady way because lessons include using ICT, art, drama and purposeful talk. Practical activities encourage pupils to respond in different ways, as do the opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own lives in the light of their learning about religion and belief. Pupils' use of thinking skills to plan and investigate is less well developed.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the revisions to the schemes of work include suitable assessment tasks for pupils and opportunities for teachers' moderation to help them to make reliable judgements about pupils' progress in learning
- maximising opportunities for pupils to use more challenging thinking skills in the subject.

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