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Mr T Rawdin
Executive Principal
Oasis Academy Immingham
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Dear Mr Rawdin,

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: religious education (RE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 23 and 24 June 2010 to look at work 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of an assembly and a range of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of RE is inadequate. The school has taken action to begin to tackle the weaknesses in provision and has plans in place to re-establish its position within the curriculum.

Achievement in RE

Achievement in RE is inadequate.

- Standards in RE are well below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and students' progress is very limited. By the end of Key Stage 3, some of the most able students can produce some interesting insights into religious issues. However, significant limitations in provision mean that the majority of students have very little knowledge or understanding of religion and belief. Learning is often restricted to gathering low-level information about features of religion. The progress that students make at Key Stage 4 is also inadequate and they have limited opportunities to extend their thinking about matters of religion and belief.

- While the school has a strong commitment to developing students' values and their sense of community, the contribution of RE to their wider personal development is very limited. Students do not have enough opportunities to explore religious diversity or develop insight into the meaning or significance of religion. Discrete RE days in Key Stage 4 offer students opportunities to engage with a range of ethical and social issues, but the level of their response and insight is often relatively superficial.

Quality of teaching of RE

It was not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching of RE.

- The majority of the lessons observed were not focused on RE. The teaching in the integrated 'opening minds' programme in Key Stage 3 often included a number of good features. Lessons were well organised, relationships with students and attitudes to learning were positive, and teachers used a range of effective strategies and resources to engage students actively in their work. However, teachers often lacked the subject expertise necessary to apply their skills effectively in the context of RE or to identify appropriate learning objectives.

Quality of the curriculum in RE

The quality of the curriculum in RE is inadequate.

- Soon after the academy was established, RE was virtually eliminated from the curriculum. More recently, action has been taken to begin to re-establish the subject and plans are in place to extend this provision further.
- At present, however, the elements of RE within the curriculum lack breadth, balance, and coherence. The delivery of the subject varies from teacher to teacher with no monitoring to ensure that all students receive their entitlement. Opportunities to investigate Christianity are very limited.
- The school has established a pattern of RE days across Years 9 to 11 to provide some opportunities for students at Key Stage 4 to explore a variety of philosophical and ethical issues. Plans are in place to extend and focus the RE elements within the integrated skills-based programme in Years 7 and 8. All these plans will require further refinement and coordination to secure a balanced and progressive programme of RE across the school. Students in the sixth form have some opportunities to explore issues of belief and value through tutorials and assemblies and plans are in place for a post-16 RE conference.
- Some opportunities exist to enrich student's learning through broader Oasis-related activities, such as the Alpha courses and links with other academies overseas. However, opportunities to have contact with a wide diversity of religious communities are rare and the contribution of RE to this dimension of community cohesion is very limited.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in RE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is inadequate but improving.

- After a period of uncertainty, the academy has clarified its statutory responsibilities for the subject. RE is not monitored effectively and no reliable data are available about students' progress. An action plan has been established in relation to the provision of RE at Key Stage 4, but provision is not coordinated across the school.
- Progress is being made in identifying how the subject can be incorporated within the academy's competency-based curriculum. The academy recognises that significant staff training will be required to ensure that the plans are implemented effectively.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- refining and implementing the plans to incorporate RE more effectively within the curriculum in Years 7 and 8 and, once established, extending the provision for the subject at Key Stage 4
- providing a programme of subject training for all those who will deliver RE in the revised Key Stage 3 programme
- improving the overall leadership and coordination of RE across the school.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop RE in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Alan Brine
Her Majesty's Inspector