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Dr A-H Murshad  
Headteacher  
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Dear Dr Murshad

**Ofsted 2010–11 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 24 November 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 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.

- In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress. Although the standards on entry are below average, including in literacy, they achieve well in RE. They continue to make progress in Key Stage 2. As a result, the standard of their work corresponds with their attainment in other areas in school. It is at least in line with the expectations in the locally agreed syllabus, and in some respects exceeds them.
- Some of their work shows particular strengths because they have learnt how to relate their exploration of religions to their own life situations, by dealing with concepts and ideas which they encounter in everyday life. As

a result, they show a lively interest in learning about beliefs and practices different from those of their own family background and are at ease in discussing them with each other. This complements their ability to apply what they learn to their own family traditions and religious faith. So, in exploring the underlying values of the Hindu festival of Diwali, they are able to see similar values at work in their own community and can explain why these values are important both to Hindus and to themselves.

- The contribution of RE to pupils' personal development is outstanding. This is because pupils are able to address issues and questions which support a positive commitment to the value of learning and living in a diverse community. They talk about this as an important aspect of learning in their school. They can explain in simple terms how this contributes to the cohesion of the school community and why they enjoy learning together.

### **Quality of teaching of RE**

The quality of teaching of RE is good.

- Teachers bring a wide range of experience to their RE lessons and ensure that their own faith and community backgrounds provide an effective resource for learning. Additionally, because of the whole-school emphasis on promoting good teaching and effective assessment for learning, teachers are able to use these same skills in developing their teaching of RE. Thus, teachers are well-attuned to addressing the underlying concepts of the subject. They are aware of its potential for promoting understanding and respect between those who hold differing beliefs and values, and thus of supporting a sense of cohesion within the school community, and beyond.
- In the observed lessons, teachers had a confident knowledge and understanding of the traditions they were dealing with. They could answer pupils' sometimes searching questions. They were aware of some of the sensitivities which arise from cultural factors within particular communities, though occasionally this tended towards broad generalisations. The lessons were lively and stimulating and pupils enjoyed opportunities to express their own ideas. The school is aware of the need for further subject knowledge enhancement among the teaching staff.
- Pupils' work in RE is monitored and assessed in line with the school's policy and practice. Pupils receive helpful guidance on how they can improve their work further, and formal assessments ensure that they are broadly aware of their own progress and achievement. The school is developing processes for target-setting to further support pupils' learning in RE.

### **Quality of the curriculum in RE**

The quality of the curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- RE is part of the humanities subject area, though taught separately. At this stage, the programmes of study in the locally agreed syllabus are being introduced into the school's curriculum, but the process is at an early stage of development. The school also follows the International Primary Curriculum and RE elements are introduced into this programme in a way which is faithful to the concepts and attainment targets of the subject.
- Because of good leadership, the RE curriculum is being developed to ensure that learning is focused on key questions which show a progression of challenge. The key concepts of the subject are also an important feature of planning, so that pupils are encouraged to develop their own ideas through their engagement with religious belief and practice.
- The formal curriculum is supported extensively with a wealth of human resources. In particular, enrichment activities, such as visits to diverse local places of worship and the use of members of staff and other local faith community representatives as exemplars and role-models, provide a strong learning context for pupils to appreciate and value diversity, and to have confidence in their own family traditions.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in RE**

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is good.

- Teachers are well supported with resources and guidance for planning by the subject curriculum leader. In turn, development and progress are monitored by the school's senior leadership to ensure that its policies and best practice in teaching, learning and assessment inform the RE curriculum and the teaching of the subject across the school.
- The headteacher ensures that the vision for the school as an enjoyable, diverse and challenging place of learning underpins all its activities. RE is seen as playing a pivotal and essential role in pupils' education and the development of their skills for life.
- As a result, the school's potential for further development in RE is strong.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- continuing to develop the school's RE curriculum in line with the locally agreed syllabus
- ensuring that all teachers have opportunities to develop their own subject knowledge and understanding in RE
- developing further a process of target-setting to support learning in RE.

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 sent to your local authority and SACRE and will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection.

Yours sincerely

**John Rudge**  
**Additional Inspector**