

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs S Tunn
Headteacher
Normanton Junior School
Church Lane
Normanton
West Yorkshire
WF6 1EY

Dear Mrs Tunn

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: religious education (RE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 29 June 2012 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of RE is satisfactory.

Achievement in RE

Achievement in RE is satisfactory.

- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain standards which are broadly in line with the expectations set out in the Wakefield agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory across the school. Pupils can describe some of elements of the religions that they have encountered. Generally, pupils can explain the impact of religion and belief on people's lives.
- Pupils are less confident in making links between religions and their understanding of differences within religions is limited. Overall, pupils do not have a coherent knowledge about the religions studied, reflecting weaknesses in curricular provision. Not enough opportunities are given to extend pupils' deeper understanding of religious material.

- The contribution of RE to pupils' personal development is good. Spiritual and moral aspects of life are explored well within and beyond the RE provision. Pupils readily identify the importance of religion and belief in contemporary Britain and what they might 'learn from' religion.

Quality of teaching in RE

The quality of teaching in RE is satisfactory with good features.

- Lessons are structured well so that pupils have a fair understanding of the purpose of lessons and expected outcomes in learning. The use of a reasonable range of resources, including information and communication technology and artefacts, enlivens learning.
- In the lessons observed, teachers used questioning well to check pupils' understanding and extend their thinking. Pupils responded well to pair and group work and recorded their own thoughts confidently.
- More typically, teaching is less effective when the range of skills pupils are required to use does not fully extend to investigating religion and belief systematically, as suggested in the units of work.
- Currently, pupils receive mostly verbal feedback on how well they have learnt. The school has identified the need to develop effective and manageable monitoring systems to assess pupils' progress robustly.

Quality of the curriculum in RE

The quality of the curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- The school follows the locally agreed syllabus closely, securing a generally balanced coverage of the subject. In practice, more of the time is allocated to covering 'learning from' rather than 'learning about' religion.
- Detailed units of work are well organised but the implementation of these is variable. When effective, the curriculum enables pupils to develop a sound knowledge of some of the key elements of religion. Inconsistencies in the application of the schemes of work result in some fragmented learning. Units include assessment tasks which are underpinned by level descriptors suggested in the agreed syllabus. However, the use of these level descriptors is insufficient to inform planning and, as a result, the work does not always match the pupils' needs.
- Some good links with local churches help to enhance learning about Christianity. Experience of other religions through visits and visitors help to develop pupils' appreciation of religious and cultural diversity in modern Britain.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in RE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is satisfactory with good capacity to improve.

- The subject leader brings enthusiasm to the role and to the subject. Good support is provided to teachers, particularly those who are newly qualified. Teachers and staff who teach RE show commitment to the subject and try to ensure that they develop their subject knowledge.
- The school has recently evaluated the provision, particularly the structure of the curriculum. This process has rightly identified strengths and weaknesses. A well-considered action plan is in place to raise pupils' standards further.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- maximising opportunities for pupils to develop a deeper and more coherent understanding of religion and belief
- developing a more structured approach to the monitoring of pupils' progress so that teachers are able to make secure assessments about the standards reached by pupils.

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

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website and sent to SACRE. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector