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Mrs S Tryner
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Tryner

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 6 July 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 four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of RE is satisfactory with some good features.

Achievement in RE

Achievement in RE is satisfactory.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage can talk confidently about what is special to them and could recall elements of the story about Noah and the Ark well. Attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is in line with the expectations set out in the Nottinghamshire agreed syllabus. Some pupils attain above these expectations in Year 2 and in Key Stage 2. Overall, this represents satisfactory achievement for the majority and good achievement for those pupils whose starting points are a little below average when they enter Key Stage 1.
- Pupils can identify key features of religion and belief and describe similarities and differences between religions with growing confidence. They can explain how religion impacts on people's lives. Where pupils' achievement is less secure there is some confusion about aspects of belief

linked to particular religions. Pupils' depth of understanding about religions studied, including differences within religions, is not fully secure. Although some pupils have opportunities to think about 'big questions', a more consistent, enquiry-based approach to learning in the subject is underdeveloped.

- The contribution of RE to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are interested in learning about different religions and say that it is important to respect religious diversity. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour in the lessons observed was good.

Quality of teaching in RE

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

- Lessons are structured and are suitably paced. Pupils have a clear understanding of their tasks which are usually varied and matched to pupils' different needs. In all the lessons observed, pupils were actively involved. They say that they have opportunities to discuss their ideas and to reflect on aspects of their experience. The use of information and communication technology helps to enliven learning; for example, in one lesson observed, pupils enjoyed using hand-held devices and tablet computers. This enabled them to make good progress in their learning. Additionally, in all the lessons observed, close attention was paid to developing pupils' literacy skills. Pupils say that this is typical and their views are matched by the work seen in their books.
- While there are good features to the teaching, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to use higher order thinking skills in investigating, interpreting and evaluating religion and belief.
- Teachers are aware of the Nottinghamshire agreed syllabus level descriptors and use these to assess pupils' progress and to report to parents and carers. The subject leader has identified a need to further strengthen the use of assessment in marking pupils' work and moderating judgements.

Quality of the curriculum in RE

The quality of the curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- The long-term plan outlines what is to be taught and this is linked to the agreed syllabus. Short-term plans identify which elements from the long-term plan are covered, using a mix of topics and discrete approaches. The process of planning includes teaching assistants who take the lead in the teaching for some parts of the year.
- Although the quality of planning is generally suitable, it is not consistent. In the better examples it is sufficiently detailed with clear references to assessment. However, planning does not always show how pupils' skills of enquiry are to be built on progressively, linked to pupils' conceptual understanding of religion and belief.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in RE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is satisfactory with good capacity for improvement.

- The subject benefits from strong leadership. The subject leader's commitment to improvement is clear and action taken to date is helping to improve the provision. However, this is not yet fully reflected in pupils' outcomes.
- Monitoring of planning and pupils' work helps to inform action planning which identifies suitable priorities that are focused on improving pupils' learning.
- Staff are supported well by the subject leader who has taken advantage of very recent opportunities for professional development. The benefits from training are being implemented and further action is planned for the new academic year.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- maximising opportunities for pupils to use more investigative, enquiry-based approaches to learning in the subject
- improving curriculum planning to secure a consistent approach to the development of pupils' conceptual understanding of religion and belief.

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