

02 February 2007

Mr A E Mockridge  
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Dear Mr Mockridge

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 1 February 2007 to look at work in religious education (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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of RE was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and Standards

Achievement and standards in RE are satisfactory.

- Standards in RE are average and pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. There is some underperformance, particularly among higher ability pupils and some variability in achievement from class to class.
- Pupils enjoy RE, demonstrating positive attitudes and good behaviour. Their personal development has a number of strengths and is good overall. Pupils express views confidently and know these are taken seriously.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is satisfactory.

- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is variable. Some have not yet acquired the subject knowledge required to stretch the most able pupils. As a result they do not provide these pupils resources and explanations which are sufficiently challenging.
- Teaching methods, derived from ideas in the scheme of work, are often imaginative and engaging.
- The subject leader has initiated some very good systems for assessment and recording but these are not yet put to full use across the school to help pupils improve.
- Although teachers establish the level at which pupils are working, this information is not used consistently to set work that will enable all pupils to work towards their target level.

## Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the RE curriculum is good.

- The curriculum has improved considerably since the last inspection. Statutory requirements are met and all pupils are taught RE for at least one hour a week.
- Planning is based on the new Dorset Agreed Syllabus and is organised in a way that allows pupils to build soundly on what they have already done. Evidence of this was seen in a Year 3 lesson where pupils developed knowledge of Hinduism acquired at Key Stage 1.

## Leadership and Management

Leadership and management of RE are good overall.

- The subject leader has been in post for a year and during that time has established several strategies designed to raise standards and move the subject forward. Documentation is exemplary and notable for its clarity. She provides strong leadership for other staff.
- Assessment systems are in place and a file of assessed work has been collected.
- Monitoring of teaching and standards is regular as is the feedback to senior managers although monitoring needs to be more consistently focused on the pupils' achievement.

- Action planning for the subject is based on the areas for development identified through monitoring.
- The initiatives have not yet had time to make their full impact, but already there are notable improvements in provision as a direct result of the leadership and management of the subject.

#### Implementation of the Agreed Syllabus

- The subject leader has a clear understanding of the new agreed syllabus. She has attended training in its application and has been very effective in disseminating this and other RE training to her colleagues. Procedures to implement the agreed syllabus are central to the RE action plan and are in an advanced stage of realization. The subject leader's monitoring programme includes evaluating the impact of the syllabus.

#### Inclusion

- There is some underperformance, particularly among the most able pupils but the subject leader has identified the improvements needed, and is making rapid progress in dealing with them.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- making the achievement of pupils the focus of monitoring and subject evaluation
- carrying out plans to support teachers in the use of the level descriptions for RE using exemplars of assessed pupils' work
- use the information from assessment to pitch tasks in lessons more closely to pupils' target levels.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority/SACRE and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Wintersgill  
Additional Inspector