

Consett Academy

27 March 2012

Isobel Short, Inspector for Religious Education, visited your academy on 27 March 2012 in order to carry out an audit of teaching and learning, leadership and management in Religious Education (RE). The following is the summary of the observations and judgements as well as any action agreed with the academy as recorded in the Extended Management System database.

Isobel observed 3 part lessons and discussed several issues with the leaders of RE.

Below are the strengths identified and some points to consider.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Strengths identified in some or all lessons

- Lessons are well ordered and organised. There are good relationships between teachers and students. This is leading to good student behaviour.
- Students are provided with an overview sheet for each unit with key objectives, targets and vocabulary. These enable students to develop a 'big picture' and make sense of their learning.
- Some resources used are well prepared and lead to student engagement and challenge.
- There is a clear focus on improvement and progress, especially through use of peer assessment and constructive comments to improve the quality of student work.
- Some lessons incorporate development of wider skills, including working as a team, independent learning and self-management.
- There is good use of a variety of activities e.g. use of music, effective questioning. Some lessons seen focus clearly on developing skills for success in exams.

Points to consider

- Ensure all teachers have high expectations for all students and enable students to work at an appropriate level. (There is evidence of low level challenge and lack of differentiation).
- Ensure students clearly understand the purpose of learning and how particular pieces of work fit into the 'bigger picture of learning' (this is more than knowing learning objectives but is understanding the relevance of learning and how work builds on previous learning for the development of greater knowledge and understanding).
- Ensure all activities are engaging in order to motivate and challenge students.
- Ensure lesson learning objectives are appropriate and match unit objectives.
- Ensure lessons are planned to develop and connect learning so that each activity consolidates or builds on previous learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Strengths

- There is a shared understanding across the Directorate about the key focus and purpose of RE as an academic, inclusive subject. Opportunities to develop enrichment are being explored. There is a good understanding of the distinctiveness of subjects within the Directorate but also how appropriate work can be planned across these curriculum areas. Policies are being developed within the Directorate.
- The RE leader demonstrates clarity about her current vision for RE in the school:
 - to raise the profile of RE as an engaging and relevant subject amongst students, staff, parents
 - to raise achievement of all students.
- The leader is taking responsibility for the direction of the subject and making some sound decisions e.g. choice of Key Stage 4 course, core religions at Key Stage 4, strategies for marking.
- The leaders in RE jointly monitored lessons for this audit. They accurately evaluated the strengths and weaknesses seen, especially in relation to the pitch of work and subject knowledge.

Points to consider

- Develop new schemes of work in line with the newly revised Agreed Syllabus to take account of:
 - core religions and appropriate key focus for Key Stage 3
 - developing an appropriate programme in Year 9 for the introduction of Full Course GCSE.
- Develop the 'big picture' of learning for each unit further by outlining an appropriate overview for learning. Teachers should refer to this in each lesson so that students can see how new learning 'fits in' to this picture.
- Produce a policy/publicity leaflet for school leaders, students, parents to address:
 - What is RE and why is it important?
 - What is covered in RE in the academy?
 - What is teaching and learning like in RE?
 - What expectations are there on students?
 - What enrichment opportunities are there in RE?This could be developed across the Directorate.
- Consider a range of specific strategies for raising the profile of the subject in the academy e.g. Inter-Faith Day, visits to places of worship.
- Develop monitoring within department (as well as across the school and Directorate) with clear subject focus eg work scrutiny:
 - Senior Leadership Team: formative marking for improvement
 - Directorate: how activities and learning objectives build up a picture of learning
 - RE Leader: How good is subject knowledge?; Are learning objectives appropriate?; Do activities develop good RE?; Are levels being used accurately?
- Develop formal opportunities for training in the implementation of Agreed Syllabus across department.