

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Mrs S Stevenson  
Headteacher  
Crackley Bank Primary School  
Blackthorn Place  
Newcastle  
Staffordshire  
ST5 7BE

Dear Mrs Stevenson

### **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 11 October 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 observation of one lesson, interviews with staff and pupils, and scrutiny of curriculum planning and assessment records.

The overall effectiveness of RE is satisfactory.

#### **Achievement in RE**

Achievement in RE is satisfactory.

- Over the school as a whole, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' standards in RE are well below the expected level.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are below average. While pupils acquire a basic knowledge and understanding of some key features of religions, the opportunities to integrate the emphasis on skills within RE work are not planned systematically enough and this limits pupils' ability to attain at the highest level.
- Pupils show respect for differences of viewpoint and have a growing awareness of the relationship between religion and wider aspects of

people's ways of life. Considerable emphasis is placed on monitoring the links between RE and other curriculum areas as well as the wider contribution to pupils' personal development and the Every Child Matters agenda.

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

The quality of teaching of RE is satisfactory.

- Relationships are strong and pupils work harmoniously with sustained concentration. The school encourages an ethos for learning that successfully creates a climate in which pupils seek to do their best.
- Much of the teaching engages and motivates pupils. Teaching is particularly effective in meeting the needs of the less able but this is not always the case for higher ability pupils. On some occasions, limited use is made of questioning to check understanding and, as a result, the structure of the learning activities is not appropriately adjusted to meet pupils' needs. Opportunities to develop the skills of enquiry and produce independent original writing are very limited. Discussion and paired activities are managed effectively.
- Assessment opportunities are developing. However, the school has no systematic way of monitoring pupils' progress or informing teachers' planning in the light of ongoing assessment.

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

The quality of the curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- The curriculum meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The school is beginning to trial and implement the very recently published revised Staffordshire agreed syllabus.
- The subject has some strong links with the personal, social and health education programme in the school. There are also some creative links with other areas of the curriculum. However, clear progression and continuity in the subject are lacking. Insufficient use is made of levels in planning to ensure that learning builds progressively and this leads to the unevenness in pupils' achievement across the school.
- The contribution the subject makes to the promotion of community cohesion is sound although this could be improved further. The overall learning ethos encourages pupils to have a positive attitude towards others. A range of activities linked to RE, such as festival celebrations in school and services in the local church, provides an important and successful context for encouraging parents from different traditions to meet together and appreciate the cultural and religious diversity of the local area. Much of this is linked into wider activities within the school related to their extended school work and family learning groups.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in RE is satisfactory.

- The RE coordinator is very enthusiastic about developing RE throughout the school. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development and to the wider life at the school. RE is supported well by the senior leadership team.
- Arrangements for monitoring and improvement planning are in place. The issues raised during the inspection have been identified by senior leaders. There is scope to extend the use of information about pupils' progress and the outcomes of monitoring to make sure barriers to raising standards are identified and resolved more systematically.

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

- establishing a clearer, more coherent and progressive overall curriculum for 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 under the URN for your school. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection.

Yours sincerely

**Jacqueline Wordsworth**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**