

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs Janet Howe
Headteacher
Lavendon School
High Street
Lavendon
Olney
Buckinghamshire
MK46 4HA

Dear Mrs Howe

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 29 January 2008 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.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of RE, the visit had a particular focus on the subject's contribution to the promotion of community cohesion.

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

Standards in RE are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is good and at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average.
- Pupils make good progress from reception to the end of Year 2 but less so in Key Stage 2. Although pupils in Years 5 and 6 have produced some impressive work, their progress is patchy and does not match that in other subjects.
- Pupils' attitudes towards RE are mostly positive and they show an interest in, and respect for, the beliefs of others. Opportunities to learn

from religion, when they occur, make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and personal development.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is satisfactory.

- Overall pupils make the progress that should be expected of them, and teaching and learning in both lessons seen were good.
- Most teachers have a secure knowledge of the scheme of work for their year groups and their use of ICT enhances lessons.
- The teaching methods used are varied and engage the pupils. Younger pupils have good opportunities to learn about religions through practical and oral work.
- The level of challenge is variable in Key Stage 2. While it is pitched appropriately for most groups of pupils, there is not enough challenge in the work set for older and more able pupils in mixed age classes.
- Plans for assessment are not fully implemented. There is insufficient accurate monitoring of progress and pupils do not know what to do to improve.
- Pupils with additional learning needs are given good support.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Statutory requirements are met. Long and medium term planning follows the agreed syllabus carefully. Planning is good and learning activities are designed well to enable pupils to achieve the key learning objectives.
- The RE curriculum is organised in a way that when topics are re-visited pupils can build soundly on what they have already done. However, this does not always happen. For example, the Year 6 unit on the Bible concentrates too much on a few simple elements in the scheme of work.
- There are good opportunities built into the planning for pupils to develop their literacy skills.
- Pupils' learning in RE is supported well through the school's contacts with local churches.

Leadership and Management

Leadership and management in RE are satisfactory overall.

- The subject leader has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and has identified accurately most of the key areas for improvement.
- The subject is managed efficiently and the subject leader works hard to prepare extensive plans, materials and ideas for teaching and learning to support her colleagues. Resources are well selected and used imaginatively.

- RE provision runs smoothly and there is some monitoring of lesson plans. However, the subject leader has correctly identified the need to extend the monitoring of RE to provide the school with a more comprehensive understanding of the subject's overall performance.

The contribution of RE to the promotion of community cohesion

Pupils develop a sound understanding and awareness of diversity in religion and have some opportunity to reflect on the significance of religion in their own lives and the lives of others. The subject has strong links with the local Anglican and Baptist churches; both ministers provide active support for RE. However, pupils have very few opportunities to encounter people from the other faiths they learn about.

Inclusion

Most groups of pupils make satisfactory progress in RE. However, in Key Stage 2 older and more able pupils in mixed age classes need more opportunities to maintain sufficiently high standards.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- securing higher expectations of older and high ability pupils in mixed age classes and identifying elements of the curriculum and tasks that will enable them to reach these expectations consistently
- implementing monitoring and assessment plans in order to get a clearer picture of standards across the school
- providing pupils with more opportunities to meet with people from a fuller range of the religions that they learn about.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and 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