

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 D Helliwell
Headteacher
Brookhill Leys Primary School
Chewton Street
Eastwood
Nottingham
NG16 3HB

Dear Mrs Helliwell

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 18 June 2008 to look at work in religious education (RE).

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 creative thinking 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. 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 in RE was judged to be satisfactory.

- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expectations in the Nottinghamshire agreed syllabus. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points. They are generally more successful in 'learning about' than 'learning from' religion.
- Children in the Foundation Stage are beginning to respond to themes within religious stories. For example, they can explain in simple terms

the qualities needed to be a good friend after hearing the story of the Good Samaritan.

- By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can recall and recount religious stories, sometimes identifying the religious meaning. Pupils are less adept at asking and investigating questions about religion.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 show appropriate respect for people's beliefs and practices but are less secure in explaining and investigating the teachings of the religions studied. They are beginning to connect learning in RE with various forms of expression such as music, art and drama.
- RE makes a good contribution to the pupils' overall personal development. It is effective in fostering a positive attitude to cultural diversity. However, there is scope for pupils to have more first hand experience of the religions studied.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is satisfactory.

- Relationships are good in all classes and pupils behave very well. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to extend the range of resources available to stimulate pupils' interest and enhance their learning.
- Assessment opportunities are developing. The recently introduced arrangements are a positive step in enabling teachers to understand the attainment level at which pupils are working. However, this information is not used to revise planning. Marking does not enable the pupils to have a clear idea of how to improve their work or how to reach higher levels.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in RE is satisfactory.

- The curriculum meets the requirements of the Nottinghamshire agreed syllabus. Long and medium term plans identify what is to be taught but do not identify how the work should focus on and integrate the two areas of attainment. As a result, there is an imbalance between the two attainment targets. Pupils' progress is restricted because the planned curriculum lacks clear continuity and progression. However, the school has plans to make changes to the curriculum in the light of the newly revised agreed syllabus.
- There is a good range of opportunities to enrich the curriculum through art, drama, music and personal, social and health education. On occasions links across the curriculum are not planned securely and the learning tends to lose its focus on RE.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of RE are satisfactory.

- The subject leader is keen and interested to improve her own and colleagues' subject knowledge.
- A clear RE policy and a scheme of work are in place. A start has been made on self evaluation, so that strengths and weaknesses have been identified clearly, resulting in a subject action plan.
- Monitoring arrangements are presently informal with some scrutiny of teachers' planning.

Creative thinking in RE

There are good opportunities to link RE with the creative arts and these enhance pupils' learning. However, there are too many occasions when teachers direct pupils too closely and this restricts their creativity. Planning indicates that there are times when pupils can apply their knowledge but it does not always encourage them to explore or question ideas in a more creative and challenging way. The revision of the locally agreed syllabus will provide the opportunity for the school to develop a more coherent curriculum for RE.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- examining ways of reviewing the RE curriculum to ensure greater continuity and progression
- completing the implementation of the assessment arrangements for RE.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop RE in the school.

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

Jacqueline Wordsworth
Her Majesty's Inspector