

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045  
F 020 7421 6855  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Mrs M Malcolm  
Headteacher  
Market Drayton Infants School  
Lonsdale Road  
Market Drayton  
TF9 3BA

Dear Mrs Malcolm

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Religious Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 12 June 2007 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 the promotion of community cohesion.

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, a scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of RE was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement in RE is satisfactory.

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with the expectations in the Shropshire agreed syllabus.
- Pupils in Foundation Stage show an appreciation of people's different cultures and beliefs through their study of festivals and celebrations. Pupils are developing a sense of self and are aware of the feelings of others. For example, pupils were able to talk in simple terms about how the animals may have felt when they boarded Noah's Ark.

- By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are able to recognise some religious symbols and words, and some are beginning to discuss the meaning of religious symbols, language and stories.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to the subject. They find RE interesting and say that it helps them to understand how other people live and what they believe. This enables them to show respect for other people's beliefs. The contribution of RE to supporting to pupils' personal development is good.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is satisfactory.

- Teaching is usually well informed and activities are generally well conceived. Pupils participate well in lessons because of the good relationships they have with their teachers.
- Some pupils' progress is impeded because teaching takes insufficient account of their prior learning. This is most marked in the case of the more able pupils.
- Assessment opportunities are developing. The school has created a useful tool to assess pupils' attainment, based closely on the agreed syllabus success criteria and expectations. However, as yet there is no systematic way of tracking pupils' progress or informing teachers' planning in the light of on-going assessment.

### Quality of curriculum

The curriculum in RE is good.

- The curriculum is imaginative and thoughtful. The choice of religions studied is well planned and methodical. There is a good balance of work between the two attainment targets with good attention paid to the systematic development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion.
- There is a satisfactory range of activities to enrich the curriculum. Very strong links are made with personal, social and health education. There is scope to develop more opportunities to build independent writing into RE.

### Leadership and Management

The leadership and management of RE are satisfactory.

- The subject co-ordinator is highly focused on pupils' learning. She has a very strong appreciation of the importance of RE to the pupils' personal development and the potential of the subject to make a significant impact on their lives.
- The subject co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject and a very clear idea of what is needed to move RE on further. The subject action plan is closely linked to the priorities of raising attainment in the school improvement plan.

- Monitoring arrangements are presently informal with some scrutiny of teachers' planning.

### Community Cohesion

The school is developing a whole school approach to community cohesion with the support of the local authority and is currently formulating a policy. The school encourages pupils to participate in visits to places of worship to deepen their knowledge of religious diversity. As a result, the pupils know about the place of religion in their local community and have some sense of its place in the wider world. They appreciate that people have different faiths or religions and the impact this has on their lives.

### Inclusion

The school works hard to ensure that all pupils are able to access the RE curriculum. In order for pupils to respond to questions, the school has sought to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills by carefully guiding them through highly structured discussion activities. As a result, all pupils are beginning to respond sensitively to the values and concerns of others.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- completing the implementation of the assessment arrangements for RE
- formalising the mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of the subject
- extending the use made of extended writing in 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 K Wordsworth  
Her Majesty's Inspector