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Ms M Carlton  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Carlton

### **Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: history**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 20 January 2011 to look at work in history.

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: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history is good.

### **Achievement in history**

Achievement in history is good.

- Pupils make good progress and attain standards that are above average.
- They show a good knowledge and understanding of features of life in different periods. For example, pupils in Year 6 can describe and explain confidently and accurately the aspects of life in Britain during the Second World War.
- Pupils develop good research and enquiry skills and enjoy presenting their findings to their classmates. Their understanding of chronology is being developed well and older pupils are able to sequence images of homes in the past accurately.
- Although pupils could identify similarities and differences between pictures of Roman and modern houses, the full range of historical skills is not being developed and monitored fully. For example, pupils struggled to explain

how evidence might be checked for accuracy or how history can be interpreted in different ways.

- The contribution of history to pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are well motivated in their learning and are keen to engage in discussion. They say that history is fun. They recognise that it is important to learn about the past so that, in the words of a Year 6 pupil, 'we can explain things around us to other people'.

### **Quality of teaching in history**

The quality of teaching in history is good.

- Teachers have high expectations and engage pupils' interest successfully through a range of practical activities. This helps to explain pupils' good achievement.
- Lessons are planned well and based on clear learning objectives which are shared carefully with the pupils. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) well for research and for presenting their work. Pupils in Year 6 were particularly enthused by creating their own multi-media videos on different aspects of the Second World War.
- The needs of lower attaining pupils are considered consistently well and teaching assistants give good support. However, the needs of higher attaining pupils across the school are not always met fully because tasks do not always challenge them sufficiently.
- Pupils' work is marked, comments are helpful and teachers give praise. However, the comments do not give sufficient subject-specific advice on how pupils can improve their work.
- Pupils' work is assessed according to National Curriculum levels of attainment. However, teachers' use of assessment to promote learning is not yet developed sufficiently. This is because they do not have a clear enough understanding of how well pupils are developing the full range of subject-specific skills.

### **Quality of the curriculum in history**

The quality of the curriculum in history is good.

- An appropriate two-year cycle is in place in which pupils explore topics each year through the developing 'Creative Curriculum'. Teachers recognise the valuable part history plays in pupils' education and are aware of the importance of ensuring that the subject retains its identity and integrity within the curriculum framework.
- Cross-curricular links are strong. Literacy is developed well in all year groups in history and opportunities are regularly taken to link with other subjects, for example with art, and design and technology.
- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits to places of historical interest, such as Preston Hall and Eden Camp. These visits are integrated into the schemes of work. Pupils say how much they enjoy the visits and

listening to the visitors who come into school. They can explain how these activities help their learning.

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

Leadership and management in history are good.

- The subject coordinator undertakes her role efficiently and effectively, and she is supported well by other teachers.
- The subject is organised well, planning is thorough and resources are used wisely.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and based on a good range of information including scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work, as well as lesson observations, and discussions with teachers and pupils. The action plan has appropriate objectives.
- Although the professional development of staff has been limited, their needs are partly met through links with staff at Teesside Archives.

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

- ensuring that pupils develop the full range of historical skills and that these are monitored and evaluated in all classes
- developing teaching strategies to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the most able
- developing assessment practice in history to ensure that:
  - pupils are given precise subject-specific advice on how they can improve their work
  - teachers and pupils have an accurate understanding of how well pupils are doing.

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

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Michael Maddison**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**