

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 A Barnett  
Acting Headteacher  
Tilston Parochial CofE Primary School  
Church Road  
Tilston  
Cheshire  
SY14 7HB

Dear Mrs Barnett

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, 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.

- Attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 2 and most pupils make good progress in developing their historical skills and understanding. Pupils experience a wide range of stimulating activities both inside and outside the classroom, such as learning about how Victorians lived by visiting Blists Hill. Their reflective thinking about the Tudors and the Romans is good. However, opportunities are missed to stretch the more able fully.
- Teachers encourage pupils to think carefully before answering questions. The focus on enabling pupils to generate their own questions, after being stimulated by a philosophy-for-pupils approach to some topics, is particularly effective. For instance, in Year 5/6, pupils were encouraged to ask good questions about the Armada.

- Pupils' personal development is good in history. Pupils said that history is 'very enjoyable because the lessons are always making you do things rather than just listen'. Pupils demonstrated that their chronological skills are developed well and they had thought carefully about change over time. Behaviour is good in lessons and pupils work well together in small groups.

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

The quality of teaching in history is good.

- Teachers develop good relationships with pupils. Lessons are planned carefully to ensure that the activities engage all pupils. Lessons are based on clear learning objectives which are shared clearly with pupils.
- In lessons, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given good support to ensure that they make the same progress as other pupils. Marking in pupils' books is good because comments help them to see how to improve their work. Pupils said that they valued these observations by teachers.
- Teachers' monitoring and recording of individual pupils' progress in developing historical skills have improved well over the last term. A clear format indicates which skills need to be revisited and improved for individual pupils.
- The use of information and communication technology to develop pupils' understanding of topics and improve their presentations to the class is good. It has been enhanced by the recent acquisition of more laptops so that all pupils in a group can use them.

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

The quality of the curriculum in history is good.

- The school has developed a good thematic curriculum where history retains discrete time in each year group. A rolling programme of history topics has been coordinated well and linked strongly to other topics being studied.
- The increased emphasis on developing pupils' historical knowledge and understanding is enabling pupils to make better progress in lessons.
- The school organises a good range of visits to places of historical interest locally and pupils say that they enjoy these very much. A residential visit has been planned to a local archaeological dig so that pupils can spend more time on this aspect of history. Good use is made of the museums in near-by Chester.
- The local authority has given the school good support to ensure that its subject planning and added focus on raising attainment are strengthened, and this is very evident in history.

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

Leadership and management in history are good.

- The acting headteacher manages the subject well. She has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of history. She is supported very well by the staff. Although the subject is being monitored better this term, it still needs a more thorough process of classroom observations and sharing of best practice.
- Subject evaluation and development planning are good.
- The curriculum is planned well indicating how topics build on each other across time. The mapping of the progression of skills is now good.

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

- ensuring extra challenge for the more able, especially in developing their extended writing skills
- improving the monitoring and observation of teaching and learning in history so that the best practice can be embedded consistently in all classes.

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

**Peter Limm**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**