

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 M Williams  
Headteacher  
Downholland-Haskayne Voluntary Aided Church of  
England Primary School  
Black-A-Moor Lane  
Ormskirk  
L39 7HX

Dear Mrs Williams

### **Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: geography**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 25 January 2012 to look at work in geography.

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 all classes.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

#### **Achievement in geography**

Achievement in geography is good.

- Pupils make good progress overall. The high numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress due to the effective support of additional adults, who cater very well to their individual needs.
- Pupils acquire good knowledge, skills and understanding as a result of effective teaching and the interesting curriculum. Fieldwork is an integral part of their learning and pupils gain skills effectively. They are articulate and confident and enjoy discussing geographical issues.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and are keen to learn and succeed. They show a genuine interest for geography and as one pupil stated, 'It's really exciting!'

- There is a great sense of curiosity about the world. Pupils are interested in global current affairs and are especially motivated about their work on sustainability.
- Learning is given a purpose and relevance. Pupils show a good grasp of issues through an appropriate and motivating curriculum. Independent learning is encouraged through the use of information and communication technology.

### **Quality of teaching in geography**

The quality of teaching in geography is good.

- A wide range of ages and abilities is taught effectively. Staff in school know all the pupils very well and teachers structure lessons to ensure that all their needs are fully met.
- Pupils are actively engaged in their learning. Resources are well planned, providing a good stimulus to support all pupils making progress. The use of information from geographical information systems supports pupils gaining knowledge of locations.
- Teachers use geographical knowledge and understanding to promote and develop pupils' learning. For example, in assemblies and in a range of teaching situations when learning about current world affairs.
- An in-depth understanding of every pupil ensures that they are quickly moved on in their learning. Activities are sensitively matched according to need. However, marking of geographical work is not always rigorously applied and insufficient focus is given to pupils' next steps in developing geographical knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Learning activities have a practical, enquiry based approach. Older pupils pose questions about what they would like to learn. During the inspection, the youngest pupils enjoyed creating a water cycle, using water cans for rain and hiding under umbrellas!

### **Quality of the curriculum in geography**

The quality of the curriculum in geography is good.

- The school currently consists of two classes – one for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and the other for Key Stage 2. To cater for this, the school has worked on devising a curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils, but at the same time, motivates and enthuses learners. A four-year rolling programme is in place, where a suitable focus is given to geographical study. This curriculum has evolved over time and is continually reviewed.
- Focus is given to learning about the local environment, for example, Key Stage 2 pupils were using their own questionnaires to create pie charts from spreadsheets. Pupils are also taught about distant locations.
- The school is developing effective links to extend the forest school initiative. An action plan has been devised and school leaders show a clear

commitment to further developing outdoor learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about using the outdoors to enhance their learning.

- Fieldwork forms a significant part of the curriculum delivery. Trips and fieldwork study are evaluated to ensure educational value and impact of pupils' learning. Residential trips include a geographical focus.
- Links to geographical knowledge and understanding are promoted through collective worship. For example, recognising the effects of climate change in Bangladesh and how communities are adapting to the changes.
- Cross-curricular links are evident. The school carefully uses the geography curriculum to improve pupils' basic skills. A focus on improving writing is used regularly in geography lessons, for example, older pupils wrote persuasively about why people should move to their village.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is good.

- A procedure for monitoring the quality of provision in geography is in place through lesson observations and book and planning scrutiny. Assessments are made of the attainment of all pupils, including coverage of programmes of study through must, should and could targets. This provides the school with a picture of how much progress each pupil is making.
- Out-of-classroom learning is a clear priority and geography is given prominence across the school. Relevant issues and current affairs are routinely discussed with pupils.
- There has been limited recent subject training, although the school works closely with local small schools through a cluster arrangement. The curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to be purposeful. Resources and support from subject associations have not been accessed or used.
- Appropriate areas to improve in geography have been identified and an action plan is in place. Currently the school is focusing on developing forest schools and sustainable issues. The school's 'Eco Warriors' speak passionately about environmental issues and are keen to promote strategies to become more environmental friendly.

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

- sharpening marking with regard to the specific aspects of geographical knowledge, skills and understanding to be developed
- using resources and support by subject associations to further improve provision and learning in the classroom.

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

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Jane Millward**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**