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Mrs K Charlton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Charlton

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: geography

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 14 June 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 two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

Achievement in geography

Achievement in geography is good.

- When pupils leave the school attainment is broadly in line with national averages. Pupils make good progress because geography permeates through the school. They show a natural curiosity to learn about the world around them. The curriculum enables pupils to learn about countries and continents as well as other geographical issues and concepts.
- Pupil progress is recorded according to geographical knowledge, skills and understanding. This provides teachers with an accurate view of pupils' achievements. Pupils are provided with learning opportunities to study locations both near to home and far away. For example, pupils in Year 6 study Africa and Year 1 pupils study the topic of 'how does your garden grow.'

- Geographical learning supports the development of writing skills and opportunities to link subjects together through geography are well developed.
- Pupils enjoy geography which is reflected in their engagement in lessons and very good behaviour. They speak with enthusiasm about geographical issues such as sustainability.

Quality of teaching in geography

The quality of teaching in geography is good.

- A wide range of teaching strategies is used to engage pupils in their learning. Much is enquiry based and pupils report that they enjoy learning through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Teachers communicate their enthusiasm for geography effectively and as a result, pupils enjoy their learning. They understand the importance of geography in understanding the world around them. This supports their good progress.
- Teachers use a range of maps well as part of their everyday teaching. Learning is often given a purpose and opportunities to develop basic skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics are evident through geographical topics.
- Marking of geography work is underdeveloped. Currently, it does not sufficiently focus on strengths and weaknesses for improvement with regards to geographical knowledge, skills and understanding. Instead, it mostly prioritises the marking of pupils' literacy skills.

Quality of the curriculum in geography

The quality of the curriculum in geography is good.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes physical and human geography as well as the study of places. It takes into account issues of environmental geography and sustainability.
- Geographical skills are systematically developed as pupils progress through the school. These are well supported through a comprehensive programme of fieldwork.
- The school is a partner to the Royal Horticultural Society and as such forms a hub for geographical learning locally. Pupils readily talk about their experiences in the 'memorial garden' and value this resource.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a range of partners, for example, 'Friends of All Saints' organise the gardening club and link with the eco club to develop their ideas.
- The curriculum uses current themes as a stimulus to motivate learning. For example, the whole school is studying the Olympic Games, involving each class studying a different country. The school has a pupil run committee who liaise with a neighbouring primary school to organise events and learning.

- Out-of-classroom learning is an integral part of the curriculum. This can clearly be seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage where children investigate, learn and develop a natural curiosity for the world around them.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in geography

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is good.

- Tracking of attainment and progress is routinely carried out. This enables staff to have an accurate view of achievement in geography.
- School leaders have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. There is an action plan to steer improvement, including further developing the management of the subject to ensure more rigorous monitoring becomes established. This plan is driven by a subject review which is presented to you and to the governing body on an annual basis.
- The senior leadership team is focused on improving standards in geography. The subject has a high profile around the school and this results in pupils wanting to find out more about the subject.
- Currently, the school is not a member of a subject association and has not utilised the resources and training available.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the day-to-day leadership of geography is rigorous and sharply focused on the raising of outcomes for pupils
- ensuring that marking is regular, rigorous and supports pupils' next steps in developing their geographical knowledge, skills and understanding
- making use of the training and support provided by the subject associations to improve provision.

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