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Mrs C Longden  
Headteacher  
Wallbrook Primary School  
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Coseley  
Bilston  
WV14 8YP

Dear Mrs Longden

### **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 5 July 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 four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is satisfactory.

#### **Achievement in geography**

Achievement in geography is satisfactory.

- Children enter Reception with levels of knowledge and understanding of the world that are low in comparison with most four-year-olds. They make a good start to their learning and make good progress due to good assessment, planning and teaching. Nevertheless, they enter Year 1 with below average standards.
- Interesting practical lessons and good use of the school's grounds help children increase their understanding of their locality and knowledge of the world in which they live. Children's speaking and listening, and personal and social skills are developed well.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 because work successfully builds on their prior learning. Consequently, by the end of Year 2 pupils' attainment is broadly average. The local area, such as visits

to Coseley, is used effectively to further develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Planned work successfully develops pupils' geographical subject vocabulary, map work and observational skills.

- Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress. As a result, their attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Themes such as 'Passport to the World' and the 'Olympics' provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop and consolidate their skills. Pupils make better progress in environmental themes such as 'Improving the environment' because these are studied in greater depth. Aspects of physical geography such as mountains, rivers, volcanoes and earthquakes are studied with less vigour.
- Pupils are generally well behaved in lessons, show interest in their work and sustain their concentration. They particularly enjoy those lessons that are practical, such as in a Year 1/2 lesson where pupils developed their orienteering skills by locating different symbols and countries in the outside environment.

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

The quality of teaching in geography is satisfactory.

- Some good teaching was observed during the inspection. Well-planned and resourced activities, good subject knowledge and brisk pace ensured that pupils made good progress in these lessons. Teachers also made good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support their teaching.
- In some lessons, too much teacher talk meant that pupils became restless because they were sitting and listening for too long. Occasionally, the content of some lessons proved too challenging. As a result, pupils found the tasks were too difficult to complete.
- The classroom environment is stimulating. A good range of maps is provided and key geographical vocabulary is used routinely to support learning. Good support is provided by teaching assistants.
- A suitable range of work is recorded in books although some themes taught in some year groups show greater depth of coverage than others. Work is generally marked well, but occasionally teachers' marking doesn't indicate precisely what pupils need to do next to improve.
- The 'learning journey' assessment documents in Reception are good because they provide a clear assessment of children's work. However, they contain few examples of knowledge and understanding of the world relating to geography.
- Assessment and monitoring grids have recently been introduced in Key Stages 1 and 2, although these have yet to be fully established. The subject leader has plans to monitor and evaluate them and systematically address those areas identified as requiring improvement. The school does not have portfolios of evidence which summarise pupils' learning in each year group, provide an indication of the levels attained or summarise how well the subject progresses throughout the school.

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

The quality of the curriculum in geography is satisfactory.

- Although curriculum coverage is good in Reception and Key Stage 1, it is satisfactory overall. Throughout the school, an appropriate range of themes are taught, but some, particularly in Key Stage 2 do not develop or build on pupils' geographical skills and knowledge in sufficient depth or complexity.
- Pupils' have a good understanding of environmental issues and sustainability. The effective school council actively promotes 'reduce, re-use and recycle' throughout the school. The school has been awarded the Eco-School silver award and good links have been established with the Dudley School Environmental Zone. Most crucially, the development of the 'Seagull Bay' environmental area in the school grounds is almost complete. This excellent and extensive resource has the great potential to further develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the environment and conservation.
- Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to use maps in a variety of ways. However, pupils are sometimes provided with activities that are too similar in different year groups. Also, older pupils are not challenged to extend their skills to a higher level by using, for example, Ordnance Survey maps.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their geography skills in other subjects such as literacy. Satisfactory opportunities are provided in other subjects, such as mathematics and ICT. An appropriate range of fieldwork is undertaken, including visits to the local area and places such as Ray's Farm, Dudley Castle and Wren's Nest nature reserve.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is satisfactory.

- The curriculum leader has a good understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses through a good range of monitoring and evaluation strategies. An accurate self-evaluation document has been completed. The subject leader folder is comprehensive and contains up-to-date policies and action plans.
- However, a number of developments implemented are recent and need to be firmly established and consistently applied by all teachers. It is too soon to evaluate their impact on teaching and learning.
- The school has not used the resources and support available from subject associations to help keep teachers informed of new developments in the subject or enable them to take opportunities for professional development.

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

- developing portfolios of pupils' work that are built up over the course of each year which summarise the work undertaken by each year group

- using assessment information to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject; systematically addressing those areas identified for further improvement
- continuing to develop the environmental resource 'Seagull Bay' to establish it as an effective learning resource
- using support and guidance provided by subject associations to further support the development of the subject and 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

**Paul Weston**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**