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12 July 2012

Mrs L Smith  
Headteacher  
Abbey Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Smith

### **Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: history**

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 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 five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history is good.

### **Achievement in history**

Achievement in history is good.

- Attainment on entry is below average but pupils make good progress in history throughout the school so that their attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. There is no discernible difference between the performance of different groups of pupils.
- Pupils' historical skills are developed well from the Early Years Foundation Stage. Older pupils are aware that we know about the past through written and other forms of evidence and they learn quickly to ask good questions about sources to shape their learning.
- Pupils writing skills are being developed well through history. More able pupils write well but the level of challenge for them to achieve the highest levels is limited. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are being developed satisfactorily through history.

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They work extremely well together in pairs and small groups and the majority can work well on their own. When engaged fully in the activities, they sustain their focus on the tasks set well.

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

The quality of teaching in history is good.

- A good range of learning activities is planned for the different abilities of the pupils. There is good practice in lessons, but the monitoring and recording of individual pupils' progress in developing key historical skills are at an early stage of development.
- Teachers encourage pupils to generate their own lines of enquiry within each chosen topic. Good use is made of 'stunning starts' to lessons so that pupils engage fully on their tasks. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on and to give reasons for their answers.
- Pupils say they enjoy their learning when tasks are stimulating, such as when they investigate pictures of Greek Gods and try to freeze frame their images for other pupils to decide which Gods they emulate.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and there are consistently helpful comments by teachers to enable pupils to know how they can improve their work in the future.

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

The quality of the curriculum in history is good.

- The 'irresistible learning' curriculum meets requirements for history. Pupils study an appropriate range of topics, and themes are planned well to ensure that history elements are identified clearly.
- The curriculum provides many opportunities for history aspects to be addressed when pupils are studying other subjects. This enables pupils to develop their communication and reading skills well.
- Pupils enjoy history and find the local history aspects interesting. They particularly liked visiting the museum in Cannock Chase.
- The mapping and recording of pupils' progress in the development of their historical skills are at an early stage of development. As a result, teachers' plans do not identify clearly enough how the skills are to be developed for individual pupils across the topics studied.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in history is good.

- The subject leader, who is also the deputy headteacher, provides good leadership and direction for the subject. He has a good understanding of requirements and is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject.

- Subject reviews and action planning are good and demonstrate clearly where improvement can be made.
- The subject leader monitors provision well through discussions with staff and scrutinising pupils' work when appropriate. However, he does not undertake enough formal observations of history lessons.
- Detailed documentation for the subject is in place and good history topic plans have been drawn up.

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

- ensuring greater rigour in monitoring and recording individual pupils' progression in developing historical skills and concepts
- providing more challenge for gifted and talented pupils to achieve the highest levels
- improving the monitoring of history by enabling the subject leader to observe more teachers teaching history.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop history 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

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