

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 0207 4216855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



24 April 2008

Mrs J Maul
Headteacher
Kidmore End Church of England (Aided)
Primary School
Chalkhouse Green Road
Kidmore End
RG4 9AU

Dear Mrs Maul

Ofsted survey inspection programme: History

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 28 March 2008 to inspect work in history.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on visits to historical locations.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: visits to four classes, interviews with a selection of staff and discussions with pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and a review of a sample of pupils' work.

The overall quality of history was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Overall standards in history are above average and pupils make excellent progress.

- The evidence from my sample indicates high standards and excellent progress in all Year groups. Children's knowledge, their understanding, their ability to interpret evidence and then to talk and write about history is impressive.
- Their ability to represent history in art, music and drama is also high. I saw excellent work covering the full range of National Curriculum

topics. Pupils are also very skilled at the use of computers for research and for writing prose. However, they have also not lost the ability to work with books, something I saw to very good effect in several classes.

- Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to do history rather than just listen to teachers. They respond very well to this. They ask questions and are very ready to find out the answers. They have developed a good sense that there is not always a clear answer.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

- Teachers in my sample have excellent subject knowledge and they know how to teach history well. Lesson planning is thorough. They have very clear objectives for lessons which they share with pupils and they meet these objectives. This was very clear in a Year 1 lesson where the use of an old gramophone and other sound systems led to good discussion and successful writing.
- Although there is no formal assessment of pupils' work in history, teachers do have a very good idea of progression and so ensure that their expectations of what children can achieve become more challenging as they grow older. The school's portfolio is very helpful in supporting teachers' understanding of progression.
- Teachers make learning interesting and fun. Although they talk to pupils and pupils listen, teachers also provide many opportunities for pupils to be real historians by asking questions, researching, finding answers and communicating findings. This is the case right from the Foundation Stage where I saw pupils discussing and speculating on the age of toys.
- Learning is effective because the pupils are keen to learn. A good example was their fascination with the content of a Year 4 lesson on the history of the tea trade with India and their very positive response. Another was the patience with which Year 6 pupils scoured the internet and books to begin to build up a picture of change in Victorian times. Behaviour in history classes is excellent.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is very good.

- In broad terms, the curriculum fairly closely follows guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority but each of the units of work has been interpreted imaginatively by teachers to produce a curriculum that is challenging, interesting and fun.
- It is also planned to provide links between history and other subjects that are useful to children. Thus it links with art, music, drama,

geography and, above all English. Children do a lot of useful listening, speaking and writing in history so that it is used as a powerful tool for improving pupils' literacy.

- The history curriculum is kept under constant review with the emphasis on developing cross-curricular links. However, this should be broadened to take account the range of issues identified in last year's Ofsted report on history.

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding.

- The coordinator, well-supported by senior management and other colleagues, understands the subject well, understands the needs of teachers in delivering the subject, and, above all, understands what pupils are capable of. The result is high quality history.

Subject issue: history visits

There is a long list of visits to places of historical interest as well as visitors to the school. Such activities support pupils' classroom experience well, as well as making the subject enjoyable. Particularly popular are the visits to a local sixteenth century manor house and to a local Victorian schoolroom.

Inclusion

Inclusion in history is very good. Teachers know their pupils very well and work is suitably adjusted to meet their different needs. Teaching assistants are well deployed to give support when necessary. The curriculum covers aspects of non-British history, the more so when linked with geography as in the lesson referred to above on the tea trade. However, more could be done to study the history of the different cultures present in the UK.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included the need to:

- maintain the ongoing development of the curriculum to improve its relevance to pupils and their understanding of the historical background to modern Britain and the world beyond.

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

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term and made available to the team for the next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Paul Armitage
Additional Inspector